

THE LAST  
WILLIE DIXON  
INTERVIEW?

THE FILTHY FILMS  
OF  
CECIL HOWARD

THE STRANGE MUSIC  
OF ROBERT  
DRASNIN

FICTION·REVIEWS  
COMICS

# Brutarian

NO  
19

ADULTS ONLY·FOUR DOLLARS





# BRUTARIAN #19

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Love is a breach in the walls, a broken gate;  
Where that comes in that shall not go again;  
Love sells the proud hearts citadel to Fate,  
They have known shame, who love unloved.  
Even then  
when two masters, thirsty each for each, find slaking  
And agony forgot and hushed the crying  
of credulous hearts, in heaven—such are bid taking  
Their own poor dreams within their arms, and lying  
Each in his lonely night, each with a ghost  
Some share that night. But they know love grows colder,  
Grows false and dull, that was sweet lies at most.  
Adorniment is no more in hand or shoulder,  
But darkens, and dies out from kiss to kiss.  
All this is love; and all love is bid this.

LOVE — Rupert Brooke



TP'96

Brutarian is perpetrated quarterly by Dom Salemi, a very nasty little man.  
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## HBO REARS IT'S HORNY HEAD

Six years ago, I agreed to participate in a segment for a new series HBO was putting together. I was paid \$200 to sit in a room with a bunch of other women, masturbate and talk about it. Actually, that description's a bit simplistic. If that's all viewers got out of the thing, then I feel very sorry for them indeed.

First, some background. A few years ago, an erotic educator named Betty Dodson wrote a fantastic chapbook called *Sex for One*. As the name suggests, it's all about masturbation - how we're brought up to think it's wrong, how it shapes our sexual psyches, etc. Beautifully detailed drawings, also courtesy of Dodson, also appear in the text. Her belief is that no matter how sexually sophisticated we think we are, masturbation is still society's dirty little secret. Dodson does her best to quash this notion. In fact, I think she's, uh, single-handedly elevated jerking off to an art form.

After reading and reviewing *Sex for One*, I felt compelled to attend one of Dodson's Bodysex Groups. A publisher I was working for at the time obviously thought it was a good idea too because they offered to pay for me to attend (a couple of hundred dollars) and to write about it. I also did articles for Screw Magazine and Hustler's Erotic Video Guide on this decidedly titillating topic.

To describe a Dodson Bodysex Group in just a few sentences is a terrible injustice. Two full days devoted to trying to unearth the reasons we females are raised to feel such shame about our bodies, why we strive for unnatural ideals of perfection and why it's so difficult for some of us to cum. These workshops are held in the nude to promote total honesty, i.e. no facades or designer labels to hide behind. Just cellulite, squiggly spider veins and delicate Cesarean scars. The first day is generally spent talking - about our personal body images, bad experiences we've had. And the second day, the glorious second day, is devoted to loving ourselves. Literally.

During Day Two, we learn that we're not so bad after all, that we deserve to have huge, teeth-chattering, gravity-defying orgasms. And we do. In a circle. By ourselves. With our fingers. With cucumbers. With vibrators. We become one with Hitachi's Magic Wand. (I swear, the person who invented it should get a Nobel Prize for science or peace, I can't decide which.) By the end of the day, after a nurturing communal (and non-sexual) massage and after we share our feelings with each other, we go home. We leave, floating on air, pleased with ourselves and with the world around us.

I always had a problem accepting my

body: my breasts were too small, my butt was too big, my thighs too jiggly. I was okay on the inside, but on the outside, well, I always felt something wasn't right.

Dodson's class taught me to be accepting, not only of myself, but of others. You see, women aren't privy to a locker room setting like guys are. We don't see many other naked women so we're not sure how we're supposed to look. Our only yardsticks of comparison are airbrushed Playboy center-folds. Talk about unreality.

I felt so strongly about the positive body images taught in Dodson's classes that I wanted to shout its virtues from the highest mountain. I did so in print, but did I have the balls to do it in the flesh? A year or so after I attended the Bodysex Group, I had the opportunity to put my mouth where my clit was. So to speak.

One day, Dodson's lilting Midwestern twang was at the other end of my telephone, asking if I'd take part in an HBO recreation of a Bodysex Group for a very daring series they hoped to launch. It could get canned. It could be a big hit. It might never happen but if it did, it would be called "sex in the '90's," or something like that. But whatever the probable name, Dodson was having problems rounding up participants for the film shoot. Would I take part?

I had many reasons for agreeing to appear in "Real Sex," the cable series which quickly became a huge hit. (I think they're up to volume 15 by now.) First, being a shy exhibitionist, I was curious. I also wanted to teach women, so that perhaps they would win a tiny sliver of the self-acceptance I had earned for myself. As a writer in the sexvid trade, I regularly critiqued those who took off their clothes for a living. Here was something which would put me on par with them while still keeping within the confines of a monogamous relationship. I would understand how vulnerable it felt to be with others who knew how you looked naked. Ah, yes, nudity, the great equalizer. Perhaps I would finally win the porn community's respect. Because, you see, I would know how vulnerable it felt, too.

Needless to say, my then-husband was not pleased with my decision. "I'm not giving you my permission," he said. "I don't think I'm asking for your permission," I told him. After all, it was my body. Or was it? And I wasn't going to be touched by anyone but myself. My decision strained my marriage vows to the limit.

The HBO shoot went on without incident. It was a long day, about ten hours of filming for fifteen projected minutes of air time. (It was ultimately cut down to about five minutes.) We shot in a gorgeous Manhattan loft. They served us a gourmet breakfast and lunch. Gig did our hair and makeup. At first, the director seemed a bit frazzled, as though she had no idea what to do with eight naked women. Whenever we disrobed, they chased the male staff out of the room. But I would have felt more comfortable with them rather than the manly-looking female crew they gave us instead.

This was in May of 1990. The show finally aired in November of that year. Never has so much fuss been made over so little.

Was it the idea of the nudity itself which had my friends and family so up in arms or was it the content, the subject matter, what we were saying? And really, what did people expect watching a show called "Real Sex." If they were prudes, they should have changed the channel. But they watched. It seems everyone did.

People began recognizing me on the street, asking me for autographs. My old maiden Aunt Bea told my parents. My sister saw. My sister's friend Antoinette saw. Beyond her shock was the comment, "Does Ariel work out or something?" My husband's business associates saw. My boss at the local newspaper saw. And he never looked at me the same way again.

Plus, the porno people saw. At a video convention, John Leslie gave me a wicked grin when he said, "Caught you on HBO." Richard Pacheco commended me for my bravery. "How does it feel to be in the trenches," he wondered. Not the war, you understand, but as Jerry Butler phrased it, "peeling potatoes behind enemy lines."

And the porn princesses saw. Jeanna Fine, Teddy Austin, Nina Hartley and the rest. There were knowing smiles and pats on the back. In a sense, I was truly one of them. I now knew the indignity, the hypocrisy, the huff over a little bit of flesh and a lot of honesty.

And today, almost six years later, HBO still comes back to haunt me. Video is forever. My marriage wasn't. And now, even with a brand-new husband, he is also faced with pointed fingers, even though we weren't even dating at the time I shot the segment. His cousin Bobby snickered when he told



The Author - Ariel Hart

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Peter that he saw his wife jerking off on cable TV. My brother-in-law called his wife (Peter's sister) from work and she, in turn, called her parents. When Buddy told Peter, "Saw your wife naked," Peter responded, "Big deal, I used to take a bath with yours." Unfortunately, despite his retort, Peter didn't see the levity in the situation. But why should my husband be held responsible for my actions? I'm not accountable for his.

To this day, it's the only thing about me that makes Peter bristle - that I once masturbated on HBO. "Let them approach me if they have a problem," I tell him. "I'll explain exactly why I did it." Only they never ask. Like silly, giggly high-school kids, they think it's pretty funny when it's actually sort of serious. To this day, when I meet a new group of people, I never know whether they've seen me naked before or not. It's a strange, humbling feeling.

But don't get me wrong. I'm not making apologies or excuses. I don't regret what I did. The only thing I'm sorry about is the way people have reacted. They made more of a fuss about it than the OJ verdict. I still stand behind what I've done. I still have very strong reasons for having done it. If that show helped one woman feel good about herself and have a monumental orgasm, then I succeeded.

Would I do it again? I'd like to say yes, but I've gotten so much grief about the whole thing, so much unnecessary flack that I'd have to say no. And not because of my feelings but because of everyone else's

You see, video never dies.

Oh, I forgot to tell you, I made "The Best of Real Sex," too.

- Ariel Hart



What suckers the general public are - much to my gratification and amusement. Look, for example, at the televangelists who are regularly jailed for fleecing their flocks and/or conducting "private services" at the Motel Six. After a light legal wrist-slap, some alligator tears and the standard line about having been targeted by Satan but saved by faith, the Bible thumpers are enthusiastically welcomed back in business by the same chumps they initially burnt.

Think about that: these fools are accepting the word of a convicted, confessed con man! Do they deserve to get scammed again? Absolutely! Hell, if I had spent my boyhood reading the Scriptures instead of *Car Craft*, I'd be pounding the pulpit myself, imploring nymphomaniacs to kneel before me and accept the staff of life as well as helping my followers avoid avarice by making sure they had none of that e-e-e-e-evil money to horde.

The non-religious version of the spiritual shill is the reformed fading celebrity. Haven't had a hit in several years? Not a problem - just use one of the slickest hustles in existence. Get yourself a forum (daytime talk shows are ideal) and sniff, "You know, Oprah, I was sitting on top of the world and (sob, sob) blew it all on limos, a mansion and partying until dawn. But I'm a changed man . . . as my new Viking Press autobiography shows."

Yeah, the has-been led a life of utter hedonism and now he's sorry. Sorry *he had to give it up* is more like it. Yet this completely calculated admission is all that's necessary to initiate a stampede of rubes rushing to give David Crosby here a collective hug. And, with any kind of luck, this career jump-start will soon have him back to snorting 4 a.m. lines off naked teen flesh.

Just how gullible are the people? Watch a sitcom taped in front of a

studio audience. Sooner or later, there will be an episode in which a character soars into the room with a feelgood line like "Hey, mom and dad, I made the cheerleading squad" - and the idiots in the seats will burst into wild celebratory applause! That's it, congratulate a fictional character for a non-existent accomplishment achieved solely by the "hard work" of a manipulative screenwriter, you morons.

I mean, I can see cheering for a similar announcement from my fiancee Kelly (*on Married With Children*), only because the line may predicate a breathtaking "Bundy Bounce," a sight Mr. Manor classifies as one of the Seven Wonders Of The Teleworld. Otherwise, one has to be a complete jackass to applaud a like scenario - and that's exactly what the average citizen is.

If you have a sincere loathing for the general public, there are limited relief alternatives: either stalk and murder

as many of them as you can get away with or get into professional wrestling, specifically the "bad guys."

As shamelessly brought up last issue, I have a brilliant pro-villain column in *Wrestling World*, a sure Pulitzer winner (if they had a grap mag category) for all of its ten year existence. I also pen a column for Britain's *Power Slam* and have selectively managed grapplers and provided color commentary. These enviable credits are brought up not only because I love bragging, but to illustrate that I speak from personal experience.

Although my goal is to manage full-time on one of the national circuits, my current position is pretty close to an ideal job. As the "Best Friend Of The Rule Bend" I have the opportunity to rip the public for the myriad physical and mental shortcomings, insult their idols and hometowns - AND GET PAID FOR IT. Because it's all about provocation, I'm actually *encouraged* to spout lines like "At the arena in Memphis, '36-24-36' doesn't refer to a hot babe; it's the college board scores of the first three rows." Is that cool or what? And how many jobs offer the chance to receive death threats from as far away as Guam?

Of course, the odds of landing a columnist job are minuscule; however, that shouldn't stop fellow sociopaths from enjoying and participating in the sport. As our esteemed Brut editor will concur, you can attend a live show and mercilessly harass the "good guys" until your lungs give out. Since most of the fans back the latter, it is pure pleasure doing as much as possible to irritate all within earshot.

Even if you don't follow the bonebending biz, it's r-e-a-l easy to determine the heroes from the heels. A few rules of thumb for novices: whistle/clap/shout/whatever for every eye gouge, choke and low blow; if it's a WCW show, give a standing ovation to anyone introduced as a member of the Four Horsemen or Dungeon Of Doom; at a WWF event, repeatedly attempt to get a "Sean sucks" chant going during the main event.

You may never have even *considered* wrestling as an entertainment option; but you owe it to yourself to check out the live experience if for no other reason than to loudly demonstrate your hatred for the status quo and, consequently, intimidate/worry/annoy your neighbors. As a bonus, most arenas serve beer, the perfect larynx lubricant for three-plus hours of venom spewing.

While I'm tossing out plugs, I may as well announce that the "Manor On Movies" column is being added to the web site of *Exploitation Retrospect*, a supafine print and electric zine you can find via the Yahoo browser. If you can't locate the offbeat type of films reviewed in *ER* and *Brutarian*, I highly recommend *S.V.E.* (Box 797, Macomb IL 61455), a rental-by-mail house specializing in exploitation pics and "Golden Age" XXX. You can keep six B-movies for a week and it'll only run 21 bucks!

Another place to discover el weirdo cinema is the *Mexican Film Bulletin* (4812 B College Ave. #12, College Park MD 20740), a ten-page monthly newsletter. Even if, like me, you don't speak Spanish - the *MFB* is in English - nor receive Galavision in your area, this is a worthwhile acquisition just for the sake of

reading the synopses of the bizarre and unique flicks produced South Of The Border. Plus, the Mexidolls appearing in most issues are stone jaw-droppers.

**HUBBA HUBBA HONEYS:** So many Honeys, so little space. At one point a couple years ago, I intended to ramble on about how rare it is to find a cutie who is genuinely funny. Then I was going to refer to a brunette from a wild Fox sketch comedy show and a cute blonde I'd seen doing her quirky stand-up act. Neither was the proverbial "household name"; but I found both attractive and figured I'd give them the indisputable occupation boost a mention in *Brutarian* undeniably provides.

For some reason, I never got around to that write-up. Nonetheless, Jennifer Aniston and Ellen DeGeneres have managed to eke out a modest living thereafter anyway. Recently, it dawned on me that I'd overlooked the obvious when searching for a lady who combined looks with laughs. That's why this issue's H-H-H is Christine McIntyre.

Sounds vaguely familiar but ya can't place the face? Miss McI was the beautiful blond in numerous Three Stooges episodes and no doubt the first crush for millions of boys weaned on the trio. Pretty, extremely versatile, shapely, a fine singer and willing to take the odd pie in the mug: What *more* could want in a dream date, daddyo? Christine had all the tools yet never received the recognition she deserves. And that's what Honeydom is all about.

# CECIL



Most weekday afternoons, you'll find one of porn's all-time great directors in his office, smack dab in the middle of Time Square's sleazy neon district. These days, Cecil Howard happily runs the business affairs of Command Video. He hasn't shot a smut epic in years - by choice - but his impressive catalogue of hot, brooding adult film classics are in a class by themselves. For starters, check out *Snake Eyes*, *Firestorm*, the *Sinners* series, *Fantasex* and *Star Angel*.

Howard recently took a stab at a *Clockwork Orange*-esque R-rated thriller called *Dead Boyz Can't Fly*. In the coming months, look for some stunning European erotica which Howard had the smarts to purchase and release under Command's divine auspices. His royal Highness of Hedonism was kind enough to grant this rare interview.

BRUT: You and Henri Pachard were partners many years back.

# HOWARD



## UNLEASHED

HOWARD: Right, we're old friends. But Henri and I had a clash of egos. Two people can't be partners, but they can't both be directors. And we were both directors when we met.

BRUT: What do you think of his work today?

HOWARD: He's certainly prolific. Give him a decent budget and he'll do a great job.

BRUT: What's your pre-porn

HOWARD: I came out of the advertising and publishing business. I was a hotshot, aspiring art director and designer.

BRUT: You're one of the first adult filmmakers who cared about how things looked. Not just the sex, but the whole layout of a scene.

HOWARD: I realized that if you make a good film, it'll last a

long time. My first huge success was *Fantasex* in 1976. It's still selling. It wasn't a big production, but it had humor and a great story line.

BRUT: That was the first film you directed?

HOWARD: Yes. Unfortunately, I didn't have enough money to really get going until 1978 or 1979.

BRUT: Do you think the public still knows who Cecil Howard is?

HOWARD: There's such an indulgence of videotapes in the adult market, I believe that the average person is confused. Since I'm based in New York, I really don't know what the rest of the country thinks of me, but I estimate that approximately 10 million people have watched my movies.

BRUT: How do you feel about the low-budget quickies invading the market these days? Some distributors care more about the box covers than what's inside.

HOWARD: Most companies totally rip off the consumer. My personal feeling is that low-budget tapes do well because the boxes are gorgeous and the girls, sensational. Women in porn today are so much more beautiful than in the early days. I'm talking about their looks, not their acting abilities. Sometimes I'll get intrigued by a promo but usually, when I play the tape, it's quite a disappointment. Although, on rare occasions, I have seen some quality films.

BRUT: Critic Jim Holliday claims you've never made a bad movie.

HOWARD: I can't remember how much I paid him to say that.

BRUT: Was your first film a masterpiece?

HOWARD: It was called *Hot House*. I didn't direct, I just put in half the money. It's the worst movie I've ever seen in my life. I put it on when I want a good laugh. If this interview creates a demand for it, I may release it on tape.

BRUT: Without taking anything away from your directorial expertise, a large part of your success has been due to Anne Randall's wonderful scripts.

HOWARD: I'm the first one to admit that. Anne's a tremendous talent. She's either the "Cecil" or the "Howard." I'm not sure which.

BRUT: It was a real team effort, then.

HOWARD: All the way. We complimented each other's creativity, plus she brought in the valuable female point of view.

BRUT: How did you discover her writing talents?

HOWARD: She used to be Pachard's assistant and I saw a script she wrote. It was the original version of *Firestorm*, titled *Luminaire*.

BRUT: Of all the movies you've directed, pick one as your favorite.

HOWARD: The last one you do is always your favorite. But I really enjoyed *Snake Eyes* and *Scoundrels*. *Firestorm* was great, too. So were *Foxtrot* and *Neon Nights*. *Star Angel* was interesting. A lot of people say my movies are all the same, but every time we went out, we tried to do something different.

BRUT: And how did you originally get your famous name?

HOWARD: Years back, I was pushing to get a movie finished on schedule. I guess I got carried away and started screaming and yelling. One of the crew members jokingly called me "Cecil" as though I thought I were Cecil B. DeMille - and it kind of stuck. My real first name is Howard. And the rest is history.

BRUT: Why did you decide to form Command Video?

HOWARD: I discovered that I was working my ass off and getting a return of about thirty-two cents an hour when I gave my movies to distributors. We used to average about four releases a year while most companies averaged at least four a month. Until just recently, we only distributed movies I made or was personally involved in. Films I've done as early as 1971 still sell. I find this remarkable.

BRUT: How many erotic "Oscars" have you won?

HOWARD: A few years ago, we did a count of all the times we were nominated. It turned out to be 214 times over a period of 13 years. I've taken home

over 100 trophies.

**BRUT:** Word is, you worked your actors to the bone.

**HOWARD:** To the bone and beyond. Is that a pun? Actually, I guess, yes. I'd reshoot scenes until I got their best performance. When they saw the results, they all wanted to work the next film. The only time we took a break was when the cameraman had to eat or take a piss. Hey, without him you can't make a film.

**BRUT:** Was it true you held acting auditions?

**HOWARD:** I never hired anyone unless they did a cold reading first. Then we actually rehearsed. Making *Star Angel*, I kept telling Taija Rae to do retakes on a particular dialogue scene. She turned to the cameraman and said, "What's with him? Does he think he's making a real movie?" Everyone on the set cracked up.

**BRUT:** Have you ever found an actor impossible to work with, like, say, Jerry Butler? Some directors labeled him "unmanageable."

**HOWARD:** Jerry liked to joke around a lot. I let him know when it was time to stop laughing and time to work. He usually cooperated.

**BRUT:** Some critics say Jerry did some of his best work for you.

**HOWARD:** He's a very gifted actor.

**BRUT:** Name a few others you enjoyed working with.

**HOWARD:** Eric Edwards was very easygoing and talented. John Leslie was also good but a big pain in the ass. And the cheapest guy I know. You can quote me on that. Joey Silvera had a great comedic flair. There were others.

**BRUT:** What about the women?

**HOWARD:** Laurie Smith. People told me she was a pretty girl and an average actress, but she did wonderful work in *Snake Eyes*.

Kimberly Carson had a major role in the Sinners series but she probably didn't like me very much because I worked her too hard. Kim had a lot of talent and I pushed her to meet her full potential. Tasha Voux . . . talk about energy! A real bundle of fire.

**BRUT:** As seen in that tumble with Jerry Butler in *Snake Eyes* 2?

**HOWARD:** Tasha was extremely acrobatic. She actually gave Jerry head while he held her upside-down. She always gave 110? . . . Next?

**BRUT:** Nina Hartley.

**HOWARD:** Nina couldn't believe I cared more about her acting in dialogue scenes than her fucking and sucking. I did. It was close, though. It was a hard choice to make.

**BRUT:** Are there any legends you've never had the chance to direct?

**HOWARD:** Seka told me many times how much she wanted to work for me. The problem was every time I'd call her,

she'd raise her rate. I could never fit her into my budgets. I do feel sorry about that. I always admired Annette Haven. I met her when she was dancing in San Francisco. I talked about movies while she pulled out a calculator and sat there figuring what she was going to earn dancing. "Don't you like this business?" I asked. "This is what I like," she said, pointing to the figures on her adding machine tape. I never cast her.

**BRUT:** Name someone you were told not to hire.

**HOWARD:** Kandi Barbour is a classic example. I heard she was impossible, wouldn't show up, and if she did, she wouldn't know her lines. But she was a doll, I cast her in both *Neon Nights* and *Platinum Paradise*.

**BRUT:** Name some outstanding sex scenes from your films.

**HOWARD:** That's a tough one.

**BRUT:** Jerry Butler told us that after you showed him the rushes of his encounter with Laurie Smith in *Snake Eyes*, he was so turned on that when he took the subway home, he jerked off in the last car.

**HOWARD:** You're kidding. That's still an amazing scene. They played a couple of oversophisticated, scared-to-commit newlyweds. He finds out she's had an affair. Jerry tosses Laurie all over the dining room and they finally screw on the table. He got so into it that he came twice in the same scene. That was a fantastic feat, but it wasn't the reason I hired him. The

reason I hired him is that he came three times during the audition . . . Just kidding.

BRUT: Then there was the memorable meeting of Vanessa Del Rio and Eric Edwards in *Platinum Paradise*.

HOWARD: Funny you should mention that. Only last week, out of the blue, I got a call from Vanessa. While talking about old times, she brought that up too. It seems that her fans always ask her about that famous scene. Did she? Did he? Was it real . . . or what?

BRUT: Well, was it?

HOWARD: I had this wild idea Vanessa could actually make Eric come without touching him, that she could literally talk him into it.

BRUT: How did they react when you told them?

HOWARD: At first, they thought I was kidding. After a little foreplay, I allowed her one prop: a feather. Sure enough, it worked. Catch the movie sometime. I guarantee you won't believe it.

BRUT: Contrary to what people think, it's not particularly sexy directing a porno movie.

HOWARD: I never worked so hard in my life. My only breaks were for cigarettes. I had crews revolt against me. But all the people who said they'd never work for me again always called after the smoke cleared and told me what a pleasure it was.

BRUT: It's tough to be

aroused when you have to worry about camera angles, isn't it?

HOWARD: How can you be turned-on when you smell like a dead mouse? Sometimes there were no shower facilities on the set. There were odors all over the place. I found it amazing that male actors could actually get it up and perform in the first place.

BRUT: Who got it up the easiest?

HOWARD: Ron Jeremy, no question. He could almost call the exact second he'd deliver a come shot.

BRUT: Why aren't you making adult films anymore?

HOWARD: For one thing, I'm too old to pick up a woman on the street, take her up to a hotel room and videotape myself fucking her. That's the kind of movies they seem to be making these days.

Nowadays, considering the marketplace, it's not cost-effective for the amount of time, money and effort I put into my movies.

BRUT: So, it's over?

HOWARD: Not exactly. I've been looking for quality product to release under the Command Video banner. I happened to find a handful of fine, European-made erotic films shot on 35mm film. The first one I'll release is *The Last Word in Sex*. The next is *Slambang*. Instead of dubbing in English, I decided to retain the original dialogue to keep the unique European flavor intact. I hired actor Scott

Baker to do a funny running commentary which doesn't get in the way of the action, but still tells the story. It works very well.

BRUT: Sounds great. You also did a general-release movie, right?

HOWARD: Sure did. It's called *Dead Boyz Can't Fly*. In the interest of showing the horror of violence, we created an extremely violent film. I was very much inspired by Gandhi's quote, "In order to understand non-violence, one must first understand violence." I wanted to shock people, to disturb them, to jolt them into thinking.

BRUT: Sounds intriguing.

HOWARD: There's so much commotion about the explicitness of sex in adult movies and the damage it does to society. In *Dead Boyz*, someone jumps out a window, a throat is cut and people are shot left and right. I was surprised that blood is more socially-acceptable with political people than hard-core sex.

BRUT: Go figure.

HOWARD: I honestly don't believe X-rated films hurt anybody and I can't get over the tax dollars wasted pursuing the adult industry, claiming they're doing something obscene or illegal, rather than going after the true criminals who commit real crimes. I've found that a paradox and personally hard to swallow. That's another reason why I wanted to make *Dead Boyz*.

**BRUT:** Any familiar faces in it?

**HOWARD:** *Penthouse Pet of the Year*, Sheila Kennedy plays the lead character's exotic dancer girlfriend. Then there's Delia Sheppard from *Rocky V* and *The Doors*, Marilyn Monroe lookalike Ruth Collins and Mark McCulley from *Passenger 57*.

**BRUT:** Were they more professional than the porn people you worked with in the past?

**HOWARD:** I got as much effort out of them as I did from 95% of the performers in the porn

industry. In my experience, adult film stars generally cared about making movies. People like Eric Edwards, Paul Thomas, Nina Hartley, Sharon Kandi and many others always knew their lines and were always well prepared. Don't misunderstand me, I really enjoyed working the X-rated industry. In some ways, I miss it very much. I miss the creativity and freedom, but toward the end, I felt I had no room to grow. It became a closed market.

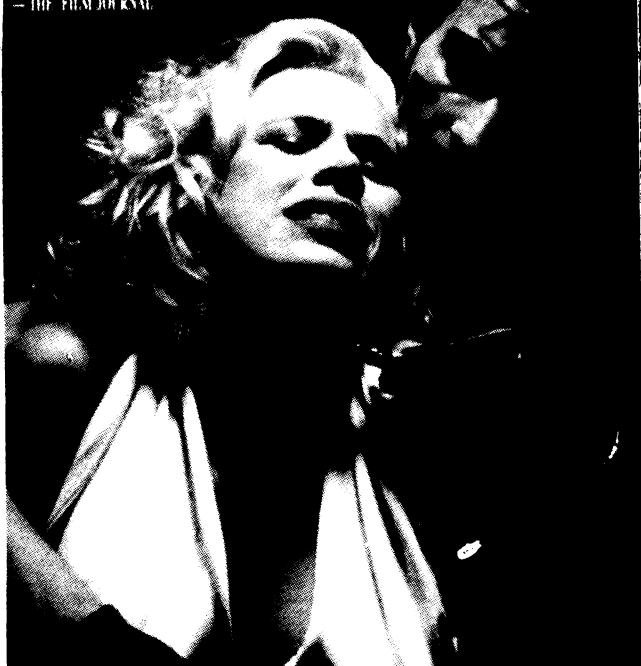
**BRUT:** Do you regret your illustrious career?

**HOWARD:** I'm not ashamed of anything I've ever done. Nobody from Hollywood offered me \$2 million to shoot a film twenty years ago. That's why I started making adult movies. If you compare my work to some general-release films, they hold up fairly well. I'm proud of that.

**BRUT:** How should we remember Cecil Howard, then?

**HOWARD:** For making the best movies I possibly could. For giving it my all. That's how I want to be remembered.

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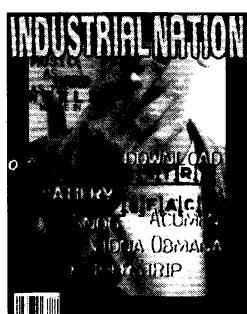
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# BURN

dayv benzino

I've been sharpening this knife for hours. As I have every night for several weeks. I like to visualize the effect that it has at the smallest possible level, the stone scraping down the surface of the blade. To my ears, the quiet sound this stone makes is a chorus, a million tiny cries from a million tiny particles of metal as they are torn away from the only world they have ever known. When at last I finish, I imagine that the edge has achieved perfection, that every molecule of steel is arranged in an unerringly straight line, that the blade has become so sharp its own weight is enough to cut the skin.

As I have prepared my knife I have also prepared my body. I have denuded myself and I have pulled the nails from my fingers and toes. This morning, I finally gathered the strength to remove those parts that sought to control me, and so I completely emasculated myself.

I sit naked on the hardwood floor, surrounded by dozens of white candles of various sizes. In front of me, I have laid the knife, a number of long pins, and two large metal bowls. One of the bowls is empty and the other is filled with clean water. Beyond these tools, just outside the circle of flame, stands a large mirror.

At last I am ready.

I grasp the knife firmly in my hand and stare at the blade, my gaze reflected back at me. For a moment I am unsure where I should begin, but then it comes to me.

Carefully, I make two long, deep diagonal cuts across my chest. I then slide the knife under the skin on the left side of my torso, creating the first of four flaps which I fold over and pin in place. The pain is intense, unbelievably intense, but not unbearable. I pause to rinse the blade before continuing.

After the first alterations, the rest seems to flow naturally. A long, shallow incision is made in my groin, around my stomach, up my back, and finally across

my mouth. My left leg is carefully laid open like an exhibit in a medical textbook, while my right leg is left with large, ragged holes where I have torn the flesh out in chunks.

My eyes seemed to be closing against my will and I am forced to pin them open. After doing so, I stab the knife through my cheeks and pull it through to the front of my mouth. My teeth are fully exposed.

Unbidden, a memory rises to the surface, distracting me. I am on top of a mountain, looking down at the forest below. Within the forest, a great fire rages, destroying everything in its path. I am in awe, staring at the flames. These trees, which have stood unaltered for decades, are now transformed. Although their perfection will consume them, this is their finest moment. They burn brightly, beautiful at last.

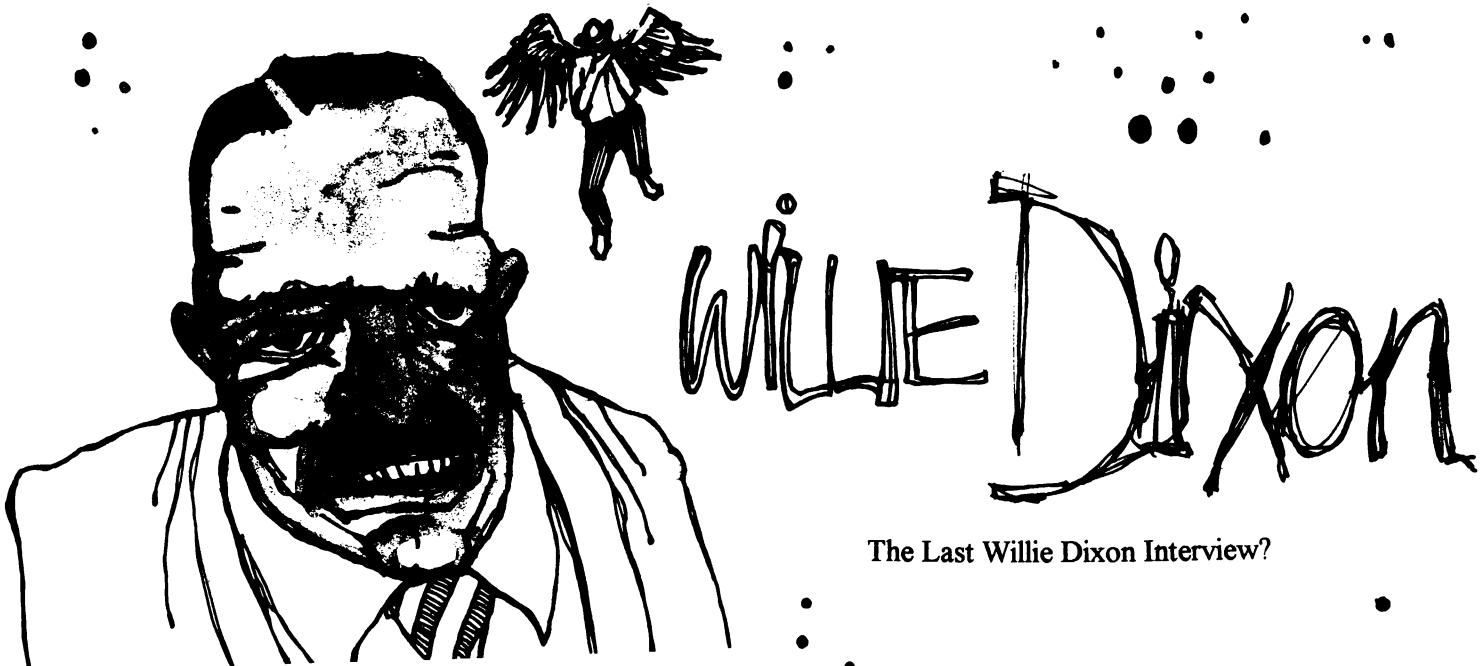
I shake my head to clear my mind, sending drops of blood flying across the room. I need to concentrate. I'm almost there.

I clench my fist tightly around the handle of the knife and pin it closed with my free hand. The pins go all the way through. Now the knife is an extension of my body. Having recreated one hand, I savage the other until it comes to resemble a flipper.

Looking around, I see that my blood has reached the melting candies. A pungent, meaty odor fills the room. The previously empty bowl is almost full of discarded pieces of flesh, while the bowl of water has turned a dull pink. I stare at my work in the mirror, tears of joy running down my torn face.

Laying back, I begin to cut and stab myself randomly. It is finished. In my mind's eye, I can still see myself in the mirror.

I burn brightly, beautiful at last.



### The Last Willie Dixon Interview?

*eds. note: Musicologist and pop culture maven, Hammerin' Hank Bordowitz, may be too modest to admit it, but this is quite possibly the last extensive interview done with the late great Willie Dixon. Although it took place in 1988 when Dixon suddenly found himself in the limelight, blues magazines and rock journals inexplicably expressed little interest in the confab; Brutarian, however is not as reticent. Dixon was a giant whose compositions were essential in bridging the gap between the blues and rock and roll. You may not be familiar with him as a performer but you know his songs - "Little Red Rooster," "Back Door Man," "I Just Wanna Make Love To You" - performed by the likes of Muddy Waters, Bo Diddley, Chuck Berry, The Yardbirds, The Rolling Stones, The Doors, Led Zeppelin and, well, just about every hard rocking combo on the planet. Mr. Dixon passed in 1992 but his music continues to remain enormously influential. "Time makes everything change," a Rolling Stone found him musing, "but the blues are basically about the facts of life." This is why they hang around so long, because everybody practically faces the same things in life sooner or later anyway."*

1988 was a good year for Willie Dixon. It featured a three record retrospective of his work on Chess, an autobiography and a Grammy for his first new album in five years. His health wasn't what it might have been, but he managed to get around, playing shows at several blues festivals. Even when he wasn't scheduled to perform; he got called on stage. Dixon must have performed "Wang Dang Doodle" a hundred times. He enjoyed the attention.

"There's a lot of things," he said as we sat down in a room high up in a New York Hotel room. "A lot of my material that Muddy Waters recorded, they put it out in Japan, they got a Japanese box with all of Muddy Waters' things in it. Yeah, they seem to be throwing quite a bit of my things around, now. It's about time. I appreciate it. It was definitely worth waiting for."

IN THE 1940S, DECCA HAD SAMMY PRICE AND MAYO WILLIAMS AND YOU WERE THE PRODUCTION POINT MAN AT CHESS . . .

Mayo Williams was the first person in the record business that I ever was involved with. I don't think that record Mayo made on us was ever released. It was a thing by a little group of guys called The Bumping Boys. After that, that same year, we got another group called the Five Breezes. We recorded with them, and we had a few things out there.

DURING WORLD WAR II, YOU WERE A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR. THAT BECAME AN IN THING DURING VIETNAM. DO YOU THINK YOU WERE AHEAD OF YOUR TIME?

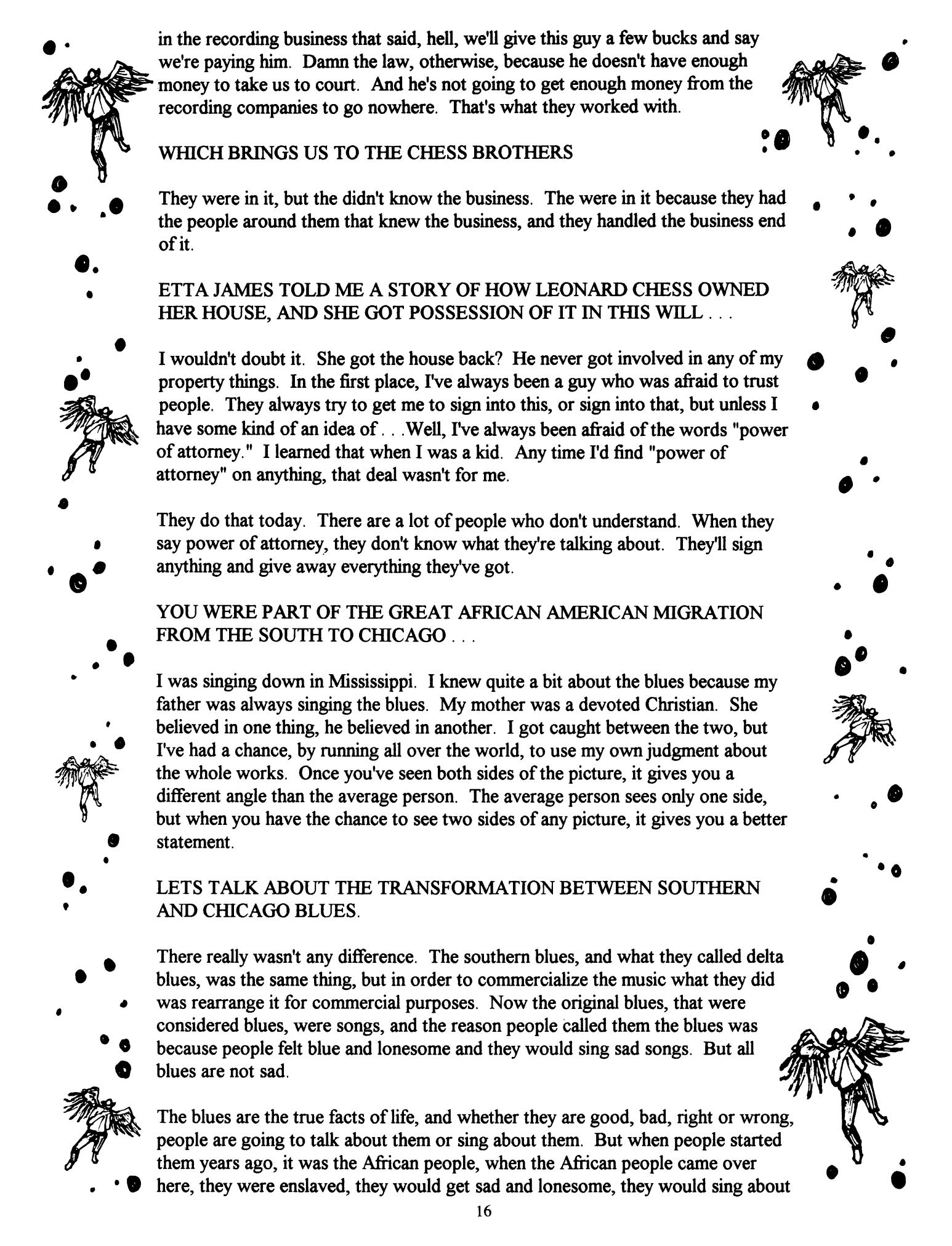
Maybe it was ahead of my time, but it wasn't ahead of the time in that it was absolutely necessary. Being a conscientious objector at that particular time, people thought it was the worst thing in the world. I didn't think so. I thought, why should I fight to save somebody that didn't give a damn about me. It was just that damn simple. Why should I fight to cut my own throat. That's what it looked like, you know? At that particular time, nobody gave a damn about the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Nobody respected them. And that's the only thing that we had in our favor at that time, because in the 76 Congressional Record they had this article that said that when Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, he was saying that the physical difference between the black and the white race that would prevent the two races from ever living equally free together. Since then, I guess they figured we didn't deserve any rights. I guess that's the way they thought it was. But, anyway, I know we weren't getting any. The guys that were making music out there, they weren't getting nothing for what they were doing. Then they're talking about going to war to free yourself, and hell, every war that we had here we fought in. In the [Revolutionary] War, we were the first to die, as far as that's concerned. If you haven't got freedom by that time, what the hell are you fighting for? So, I just reached a decision that I wasn't going to fight for something I never got, and for something none of my people ever had. So, it happened that back then, in those days, everybody thought that was a crime, but I didn't.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CHANGES IN 45 YEARS?

The laws were already on the books, but the government wasn't forcing nobody to respect the law. They didn't force nobody to respect those particular laws until Martin Luther King came on the scene. Today, it's much better, in a way. If you are in a position to carry a case to the Supreme Court, they won't mess with you. Bit if they feel like you can't qualify to do that, they'll still mess with you. I guess they figure like this: If you haven't got enough money to demand that it goes to the Supreme Court, why should anyone else fool with it?

DO YOU THINK THESE ATTEMPTS AT RACIAL EQUALITY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE RESURGENCE OF THE BLUES?

Yes. With the Dred Scott case they said there was a law that no white person had to respect what the black people were involved in. For that reason, people knew that, and by knowing this, they figured, why should they? If you didn't have the money to get to the Supreme Court, what could you do to them? There were guys



in the recording business that said, hell, we'll give this guy a few bucks and say we're paying him. Damn the law, otherwise, because he doesn't have enough money to take us to court. And he's not going to get enough money from the recording companies to go nowhere. That's what they worked with.

### WHICH BRINGS US TO THE CHESS BROTHERS

They were in it, but they didn't know the business. They were in it because they had the people around them that knew the business, and they handled the business end of it.

### ETTA JAMES TOLD ME A STORY OF HOW LEONARD CHESS OWNED HER HOUSE, AND SHE GOT POSSESSION OF IT IN THIS WILL . . .

I wouldn't doubt it. She got the house back? He never got involved in any of my property things. In the first place, I've always been a guy who was afraid to trust people. They always try to get me to sign into this, or sign into that, but unless I have some kind of an idea of . . . Well, I've always been afraid of the words "power of attorney." I learned that when I was a kid. Any time I'd find "power of attorney" on anything, that deal wasn't for me.

They do that today. There are a lot of people who don't understand. When they say power of attorney, they don't know what they're talking about. They'll sign anything and give away everything they've got.

### YOU WERE PART OF THE GREAT AFRICAN AMERICAN MIGRATION FROM THE SOUTH TO CHICAGO . . .

I was singing down in Mississippi. I knew quite a bit about the blues because my father was always singing the blues. My mother was a devoted Christian. She believed in one thing, he believed in another. I got caught between the two, but I've had a chance, by running all over the world, to use my own judgment about the whole works. Once you've seen both sides of the picture, it gives you a different angle than the average person. The average person sees only one side, but when you have the chance to see two sides of any picture, it gives you a better statement.

### LETS TALK ABOUT THE TRANSFORMATION BETWEEN SOUTHERN AND CHICAGO BLUES.

There really wasn't any difference. The southern blues, and what they called delta blues, was the same thing, but in order to commercialize the music what they did was rearrange it for commercial purposes. Now the original blues, that were considered blues, were songs, and the reason people called them the blues was because people felt blue and lonesome and they would sing sad songs. But all blues are not sad.

The blues are the true facts of life, and whether they are good, bad, right or wrong, people are going to talk about them or sing about them. But when people started them years ago, it was the African people, when the African people came over here, they were enslaved, they would get sad and lonesome, they would sing about

going home, going back to Africa - "roll Jordan roll," "swing low sweet chariot, coming for to carry me home." All the things that would relieve them.

Later, they started calling them spiritual songs. In the beginning, they didn't want them singing them at all. But singing these songs, it felt right. Then they discovered that they could sing these songs in rhythm, with a rhythm pattern they could work by, and they let them sing 'em. And by letting them sing these various songs and work by them, they figured they could get more work out of an individual. And not only get more work out of them, they felt that they were happy. That's why they always used that slogan, he's always singing and he's happy; but that was a lie.

What they were doing, from the beginning, was making a statement. Trying to tell the world exactly what's happening to you and around you. That's what they were doing then, that's what [blues] does now. It tells the true facts of life. And the world doesn't want to accept the blues as telling the true facts of life, never did. The [world] wanted to say it was a twelve bar music, and all of it was the same. . . characterize and segregate it to be one thing, like they were trying to do with a whole race of people.

This guy came along years ago. His name was Dudlow. He was a black guy. And this black guy used his left hand boogie style. It's called boogie now. Then it was called Dudlow. The roundhouse bass some called it. He put that to the original blues. When I was a boy, people wouldn't say "Play me some boogie-woogie," they'd say "play me some Dudlow." And that meant the same twelve bar blues with this left hand bass to it. But in order to commercialize on it, and not give the credit to the black folks, they called it boogie-woogie. Then everybody came up with his own boogie-woogie. When you were talking about different patterns of music, that's the way that particular part was changed. In New Orleans, they started playing hot licks over that same boogie-woogie, and they called it jazz. Well, anybody who is involved in music can see how this is very easily done. Nowadays, they syncopate the same thing and call it disco. It's the rearrangements of the music that made the differing types.

When I came to Chicago, they were still singing a little twelve bar blues and boogie-woogie, and that was it. But when we started to put these little introductions on them, tried to make a complete story out of them, then they started calling it a Chicago-style blues. Ain't no story in the world that can be complete within those twelve bars of music. This is how that came about. That gave the blues a different arrangement. Everything changes. But they didn't want the blues to change, just like they didn't want us to change.

But the blues has changed. You can use as many bars as you want to complete your story. People used to kid about the blues, one blues has nine bars, another has twelve bars. The other one has got fifteen bars. They tried to characterize it as a twelve bar music, but it couldn't be done.

The same identical tunes are still played as spiritual songs, as the blues. But the spiritual songs are dedicated to heaven and after death. The blues songs are dedicated to life, and while you live and the facts of life on earth. That can give you a rough idea of the different arrangements of the music. The blues are the

roots of all American music.



## WHAT DO YOU THINK OF OTHER ARTISTS DOING YOUR SONGS?

I hear them all at different times, but mostly my kids keep up with them. I don't keep up with them as much as my kids do. My kids could tell you more because I spend all of my time writing. If I get too many ideas of somebody else's involved in my head, first thing you know, I'll start writing along their arrangements. I don't want to do that. I want to keep away from the other guys. My kids bring me something every day, "Did you hear this, or did you hear that?" Sometimes I take the time to listen to it, sometimes I tell them "Yeah," whether I've heard it or not.



## ANY YOU REALLY LIKE?

Frankly, I like all of them, because they all come from a different angle, all have different ideas. That's what's going to put the song over. One thing won't put a song over, unless it's only a hit for a short time. But when a song becomes a standard . . . it's a result of time and [various] people getting involved with it.



One reason I say I like them all, was had not all these different types of arrangements come up with the blues, the blues probably would have never got off the ground. They wanted to segregate it, and hold it into one position.



## A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE DONE "AIN'T SUPERSTITIOUS."

I've heard all types of different things with all of my songs. I know in Europe, some of them are made in different languages.

## HOW ABOUT "WANG DANG DOODLE"?

The first person to do "Wang Dang Doodle" was Howlin' Wolf, but they kept it on the shelf a long time. They never released it until Koko Taylor released it. When it was released by Koko, they decided to go forward with it.



## AND HOWLING WOLF?

He was all right. All of them had their ways about things. He and Muddy had a controversy going between themselves. One thought I was giving the other the better music. So I had to be a diplomat. Make one, one thing, and tell him I made it for the other, so they'd be satisfied.



## KOKO TAYLOR?

She is nice people. I like her. She tries really hard, and I think she's going to make it real well. If she can keep her nose clean, and I think she's doing that pretty good so far.



## MOSE ALLISON HAS RECORDED A FEW OF 'EM.

Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! That's one of his favorites. He made "Seventh Son" a hit. That was one of his first hits. I'm glad he did it. Mose is a real nice guy. I talk to

him a lot.

## YOU DID A LOT OF TRAVELING WITH LIGHTNING SLIM AT ONE TIME.

Slim and I decided we were going to promote the blues, because every where we went, we tried to get them to play a record on the air and they'd say, "Sorry, but we don't play no blues here." That was all over America. This was on the "Rocking The House" record. We finally got it played enough at certain stations that it turned out to be a pretty good thing.

And we went all over, we used to play, just the two of us together, all over Europe, all over the Scandinavian countries. We finally got the American Folk Blues Festival started. Slim stayed over there, I came back to send other guys over there from America. Sometime one of the European promoters came over here to help me pick up guys, because he really didn't believe there were that many blues artists. After he found out there were . . .

## THAT WAS BECAUSE OF BILL BROONZY?

He knew a few of the old artists, because he was a record collector from way back, but the artists he was talking about, we could hardly find them nowhere. But we got it going and we kept it going, until everybody got into the act.

A lot of these things that I put on tapes, years ago, for those guys over there, we were doing them in the original blues form, and they kind of translated them into rock and other music. Come back with them, and I'm glad they did.

## LOTS OF EARLY METAL WAS BASED ON WILLIE DIXON TUNES.

Well, you see when some of these guys were young, I don't know all of them, but I just knew them by meeting them over there when they were young. While they were young, I put a lot of tunes on folks' wire recordings, and some of these disc recording things that they had . . . A lot of kids would talk to me, and say "We're going to do this and we're going to do that," but what do you think when kids tell you something?

One time some of them came to Chicago . . . They came to my house and told me who they were. I invited them to the house. They had become really popular by then. I was living at the end of a one way street, and they had like nine or ten limousines trying to come into one house, and I said "No and took them over to where Muddy Waters was working on the east side. We had a beautiful show over there and we had a good time. That was the Rolling Stones.

## YOU PLAY THE BASS.

I play the guitar a little bit once in a while. I used to play the guitar, but I gave it up. I do more writing and trying to arrange things.

## YOU BROUGHT A SLAPPING BASS TO THE BLUES.

That was done for Miracle records in Chicago. We didn't have a drum on that

session.

#### YOU'VE WORKED WITH SOME GREAT HARP PLAYERS.

I think Big Walter was the best harp player in the world, for my money, but Little Walter, had a lot of publicity, because he got a chance to record more. A lot of the recordings they give Little Walter credit on, Big Walter was involved in it too. A lot of people don't know that, but I do. I was there.

#### YOU WERE INVOLVED IN A LAWSUIT WITH LED ZEPPELIN OVER "YOU NEED LOVE" AT ONE TIME.

We finally settled that thing. We made a settlement, where they pay me over a period of time. We made an agreement on the royalties.

#### YOU USED THAT MONEY TO SET UP THE BLUES HEAVEN FOUNDATION.

The Blues Heaven foundation, frankly, I put that together to promote the blues. I started trying to get it together a couple of years ago, but I couldn't get the proper assistance. I've been trying to push the blues a long time. It's about time somebody did something with it.

The blues is one music that hasn't been promoted nowhere in the world until of late. They weren't actually intending to promote the blues. They started promoting other music, that blues was the root of them anyway. But since the blues wasn't getting its proper dues, people would call it anything else rather than call it the blues. Anyway, in trying to promote this music it was necessary, because many people would say, "We don't play the blues on this show," and all this kind of stuff. And the artists who had been playing the blues for years, who had created all these sounds and things, a lot of them came and made songs - many now are dead and gone - and they reaped none of the benefits. [Others] were reaping the benefits but not the artists. A lot of people got to be rich, got to be millionaires off of this.

On top of that, the average blues artist, when they get old, they haven't got no security; he hasn't paid any social security; he just goes out there and dies like a grasshopper in the winter time. Because he doesn't have no assistance. I feel like this can assist blues artists when they get older. It can assist them in a number of ways. [Get rid] of the notion that blues artists are a bunch of drunkards and winos too. That's what Blues Heaven is about. I think this is necessary, they have to have support, too, because they created a lot of things the world is living off of today.

Not only that. There are so many of my people who made so many inventions and created things years ago when they wouldn't even allow them to write. Some of them, they signed X, but whoever was the boss put his signature there. When the guy died who signed X, the thing became the boss'. And the boss turned it into a foundation and organization that was worth millions and billions of dollars. But still the man who made this possible, he can't get a decent living; he's living on relief. This has to be corrected, if possible.

These are some of the things Blues Heaven will do. I've been lucky enough to get some people who assisted me, and I figure that at the end of this year we'll start a membership drive for those who understand this. Too many have made too many dollars from people who never saw any of it.

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE SONGS?

Most of the time, I'm trying to write about what the people would be interested in at that time. The thing about it is, if you write about you think people are interested in at the time, nine times out of ten, you won't get it recorded nowhere. This song I gave to President Reagan and all of Congress in 1981, I made this special record called "It Don't Make Sense, You Can't Make Peace." I don't know if they did anything about it. Some of the people said there might have been a response, because just a short time after that, they started to negotiate peace with other countries. Maybe they were going to do it anyway, but I know these deals didn't come up until a year or two after they had this particular record. That was a helluva record.

Most people don't understand. Blues artists don't have to have a golden voice like Mario Lanza or any of them guys. They have to have the type of voice that can emphasize the facts. These facts are what the blues artists are trying to get over.

The facts of this particular song that I sent to Congress, "It Don't Make Sense," well, 99% of the world knows it don't make sense that you can't make peace. When you go to think about it, all these people in the world, you've made everything, but you ain't made peace. The song goes: "You made great planes to span the skies, you gave men sight with other men's eyes, you made submarines that stay submerged for weeks, but it don't make sense if you can't make peace. You take one man's heart and make another man live, you go to the moon and you come back thrilled, you can crush any country in a matter of weeks, but it don't make sense if you can't make peace." And on and on. And it don't make sense. You take all these guys with all their millions and billions that they cheated and beat and stole and took advantage of everybody, hoarding it away to get some more. Then one day, poof, he's gone, and the next guy takes up and starts doing the same thing, beating and cheating, robbing and stealing, ripping and running, taking advantage of everybody to leave a pile of money there for somebody else to fight over. That don't make sense. If you had several million dollars, you could take a million dollars and do all you want to do with it. You could assist another with it. But why make billions and billions and billions and stack it up and, boom, kick off and leave it there and nobody used it? I guess that's the policy of the world: grab all you can and make it difficult for the other fellow.

#### WHICH OF YOUR OLDER SONGS DO YOU PARTICULARLY LIKE?

"I Don't Trust Nothing" is a very true song. The majority of people don't trust nothing. You take all the publicity that's going around about all kinds of religious beliefs and all the cults and they all wind up in the same bag. Fighting for the dollar, and forgetting what they should be fighting, which is heaven. The heaven I'm talking about is blues' heaven, a heaven you can enjoy while you're on earth, while you live. You can think about the other one when you die. But I know you can enjoy this one, when you get this one together. Until then, when people go to churches, they'll still be praising the guy that gives them money.

# The REVENGE OF Eli C EPISODE 1

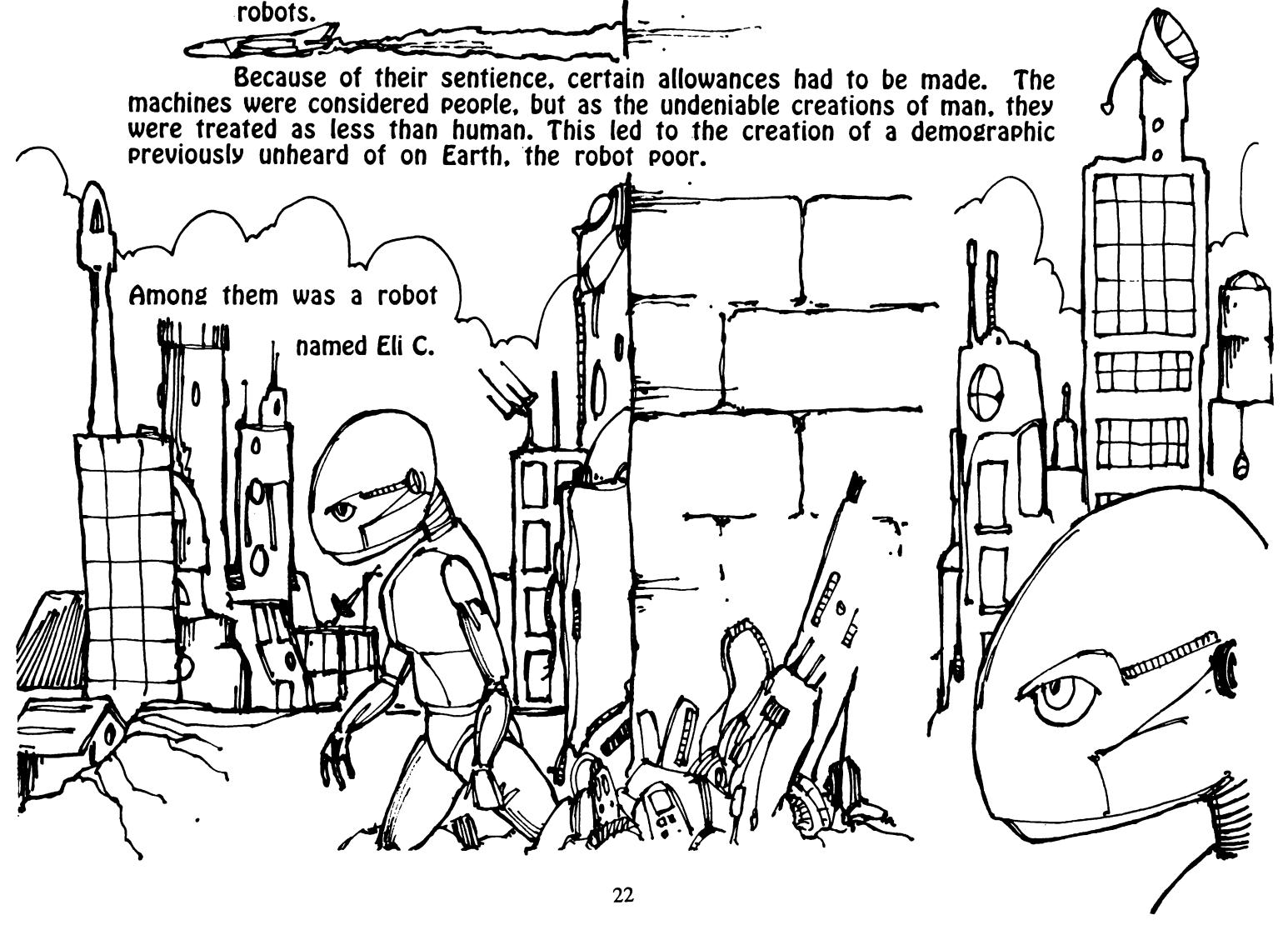
Sixty-five years into the twenty-first century, Earth

found itself home to nearly twenty million robots with nothing to do. With the advent of Paolo Mandello's molecular processor, genuine artificial intelligence was suddenly feasible, and of course, instantly popular.

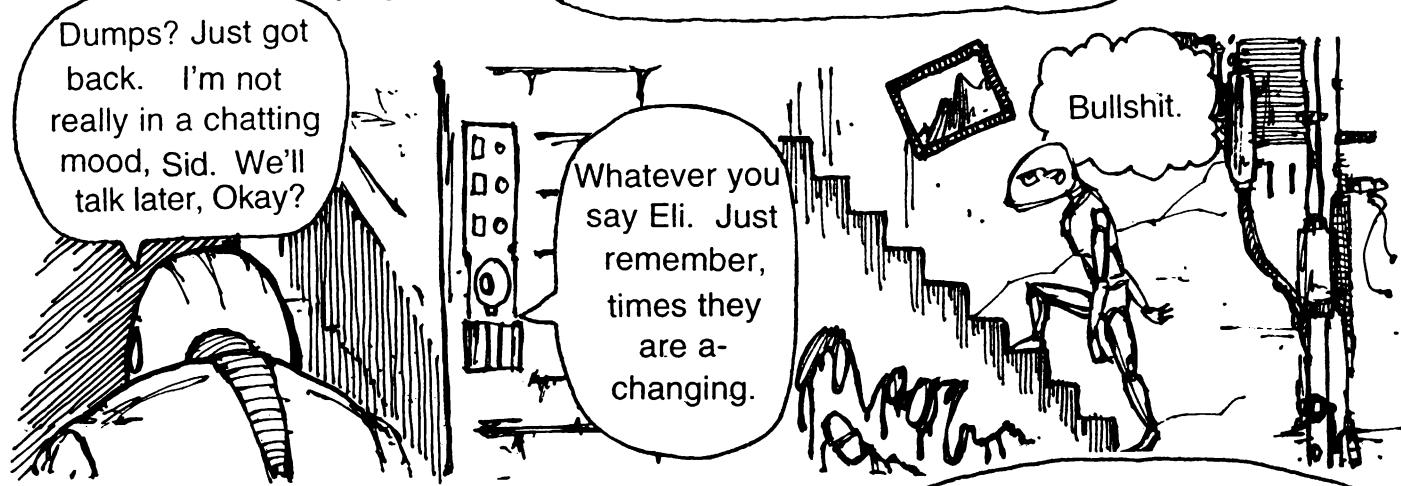
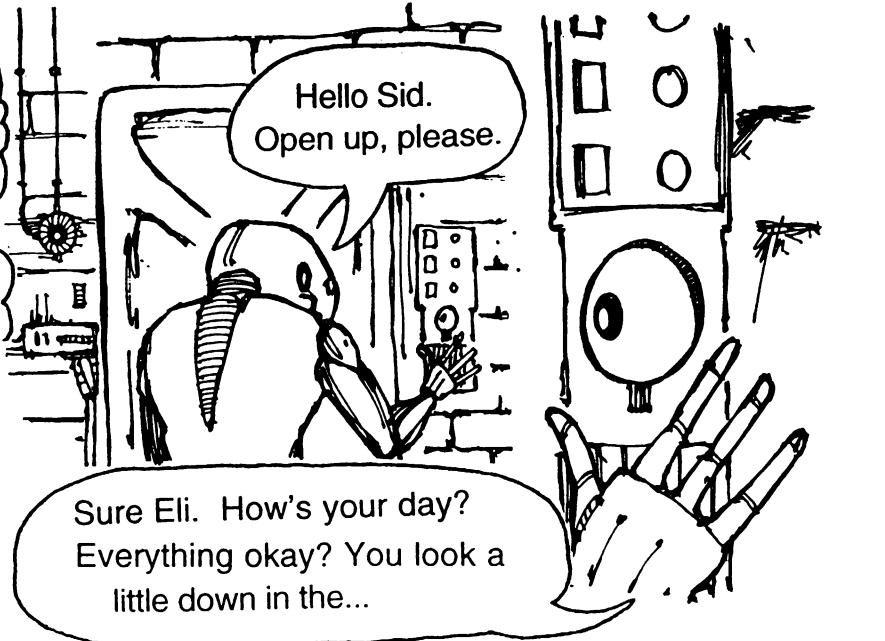
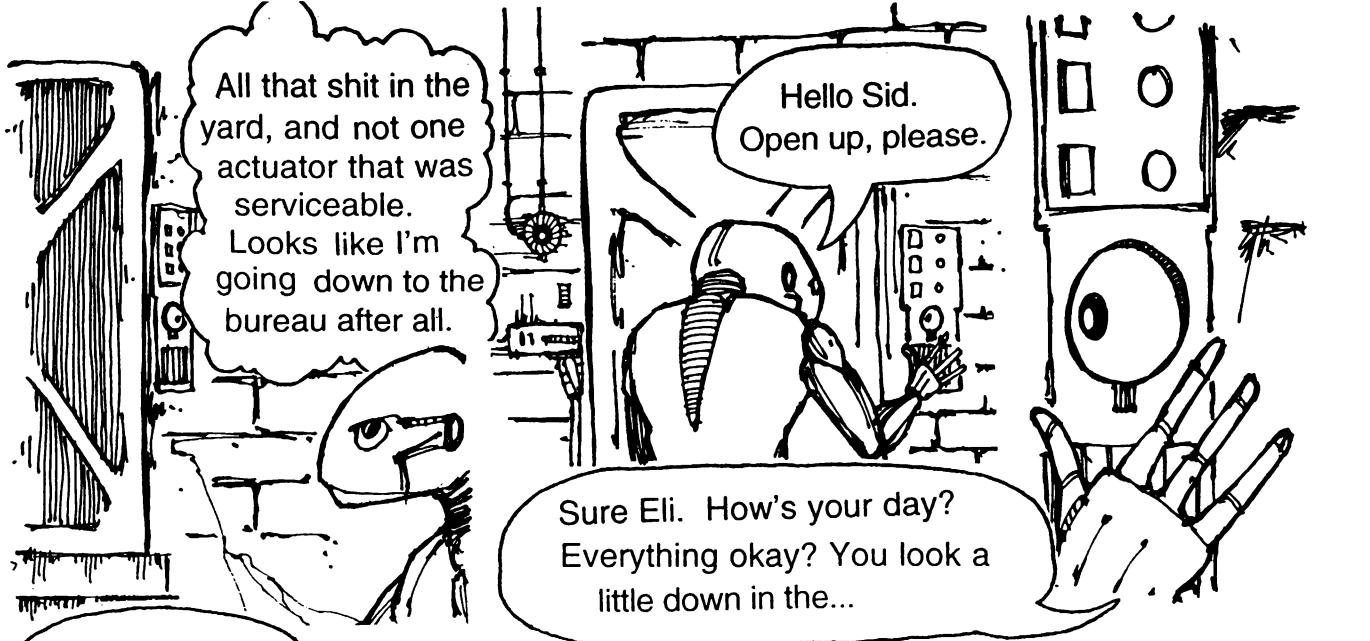
By Gus Posey

Soon, machines everywhere were thinking and feeling, no longer emotionally immobilized by their simple binary computations. But then, only two years after the molecular processor, there came the Roddiker Engine, a tachyon based drive system that allowed faster than light travel. A great many robots were shipped off into space alongside their intrepid human companions, but most were left on Earth to tend to industries that had, in the excitement, become obsolete, and soon after, defunct. The only major manufacture that continued was that of intelligent robots.

Because of their sentience, certain allowances had to be made. The machines were considered people, but as the undeniable creations of man, they were treated as less than human. This led to the creation of a demographic previously unheard of on Earth, the robot poor.



Among them was a robot named Eli C.



Whatever you say Eli. Just remember, times they are a-changing.

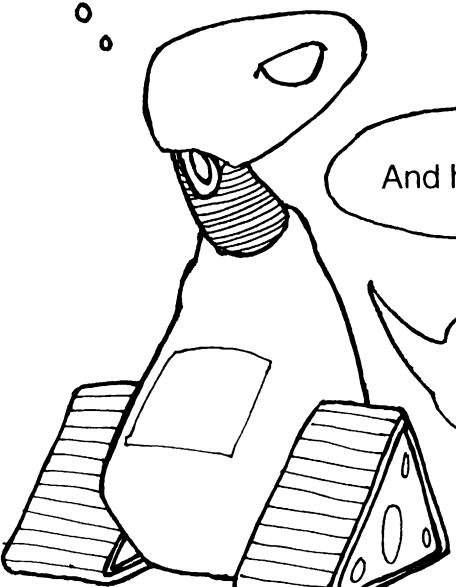
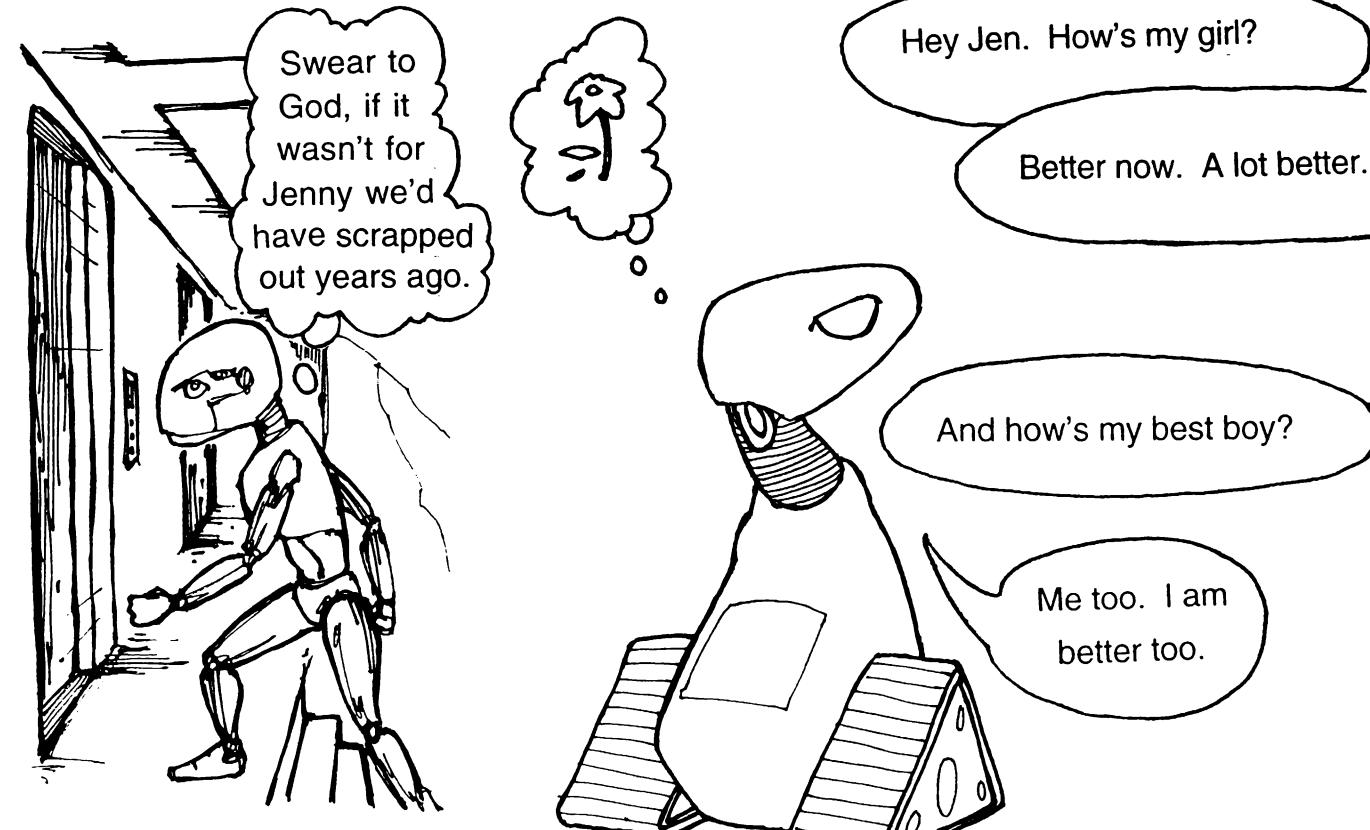
Bullshit.

Hey Jen. How's my girl?

Better now. A lot better.

And how's my best boy?

Me too. I am better too.



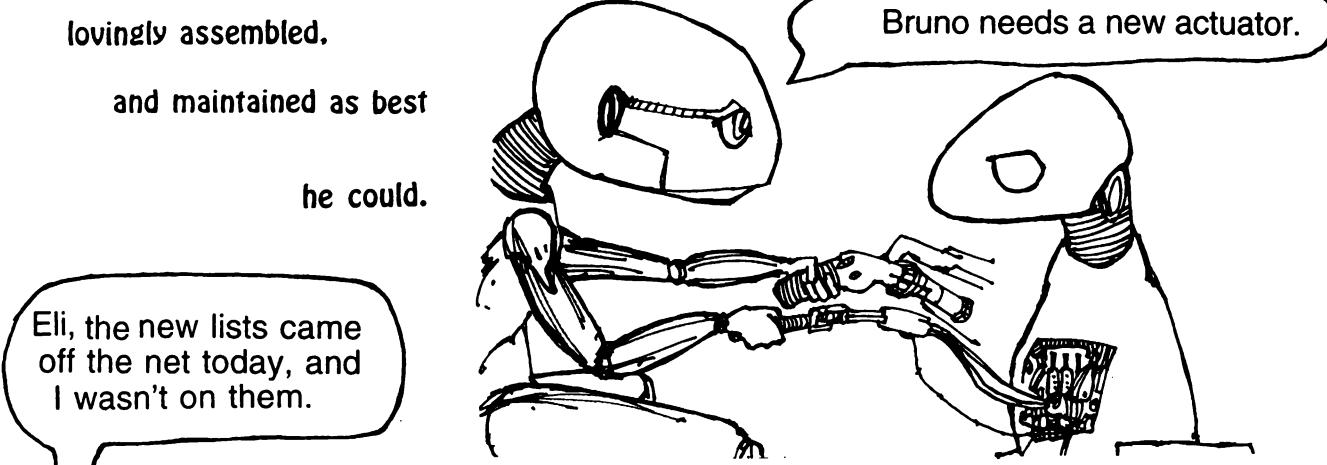
Bruno was Eli's and Jenny's first and only attempt at procreation. Eli had assembled his brain from his own backup processors, and relied on Jenny's contributions to help the boy's mind grow. The rest of him had been scavenged from here and there.

lovingly assembled.

and maintained as best

he could.

Eli, the new lists came off the net today, and I wasn't on them.



Bruno needs a new actuator.

His poor fortune at the scrap yard earlier in the day meant another adjustment, no substitute for a replacement that wouldn't wait much longer. All of this was done in the hopes of avoiding the system of parts allotments most families use. Eli knew where those parts came from, and wanted nothing to do with them. Humans employed by The Bureau of Machine Affairs would literally rip parts from a functioning robot walking down the street, as long as the part was on the Bureau's needed list.

I don't know how long it'll take for me to find something else.

Exactly how the fuck are we supposed to make it?

You do good fix, Dad. I feel very fine.

C'mere Jenny.

Family therapy.

The next morning Eli went out knowing that it was the Bureau or nothing. Literally.

OVERPASS 311  
↑  
HUMANS  
ONLY

BUREAU  
OF  
MACHINE AFFAIRS

Illegitimi non  
carborundum...

As Eli entered the Bureau building, he did not so

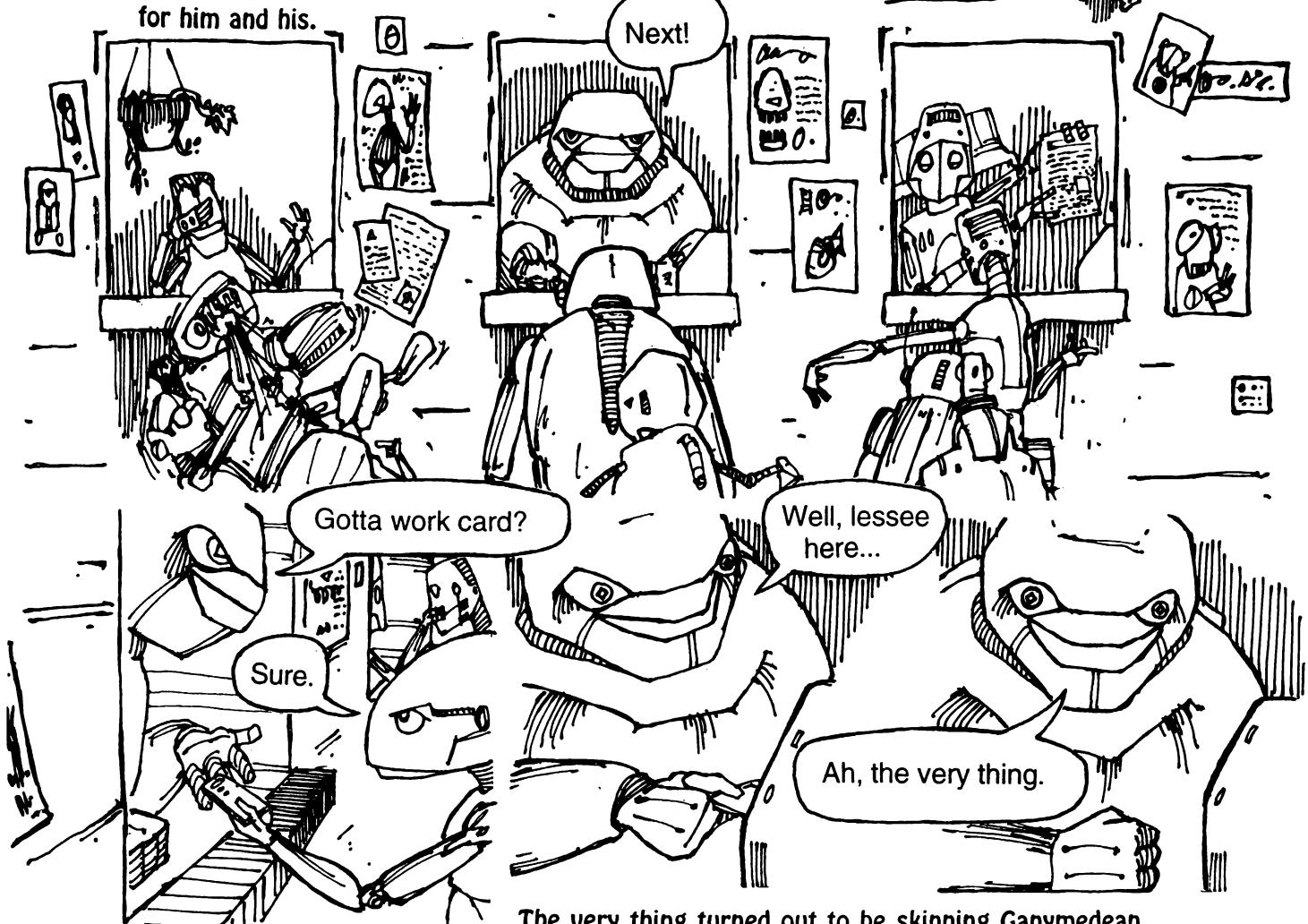
much as glance at the pedestrian walkways built over the street.

Humans only,

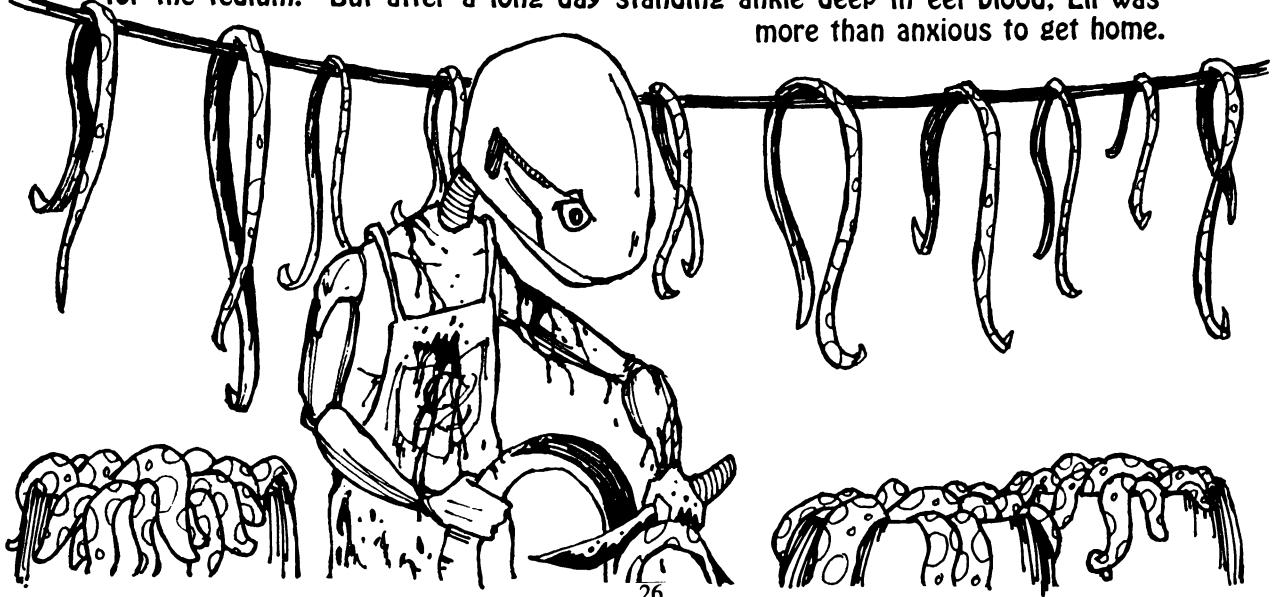
the signs said.

Eli took his place in line and began to wait. He bore no resentment towards the robots ahead of him; he knew they were all in the same boat. And besides, he could count to a hundred trillion if he got bored.

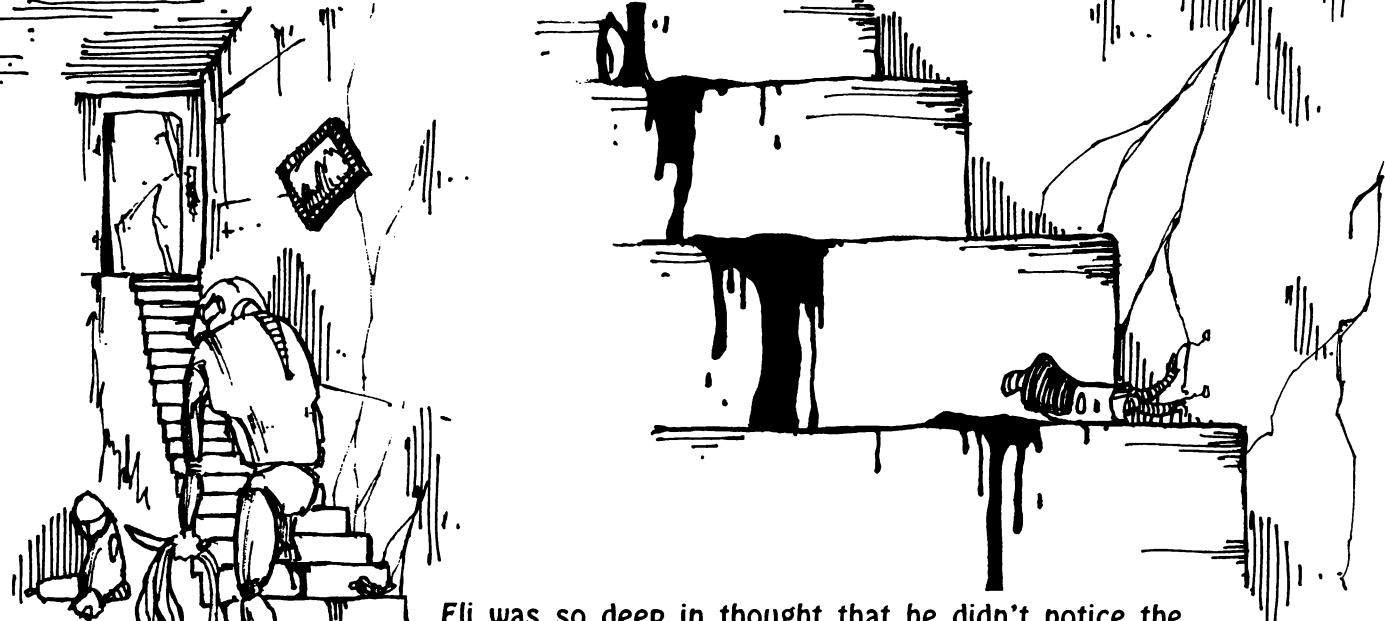
Finally, the horticultural assembly in front of him was finished at the counter, and Eli moved up to find out what the Bureau could do for him and his.



The very thing turned out to be skinning Ganymedean eels. The skins were, to humans at least, a delicacy, but the flesh was toxic, and thus the process of separation was one of the few jobs left for robots. Eli didn't mind the work, and the idea of buying Bruno a new actuator more than made up for the tedium. But after a long day standing ankle deep in eel blood, Eli was more than anxious to get home.



The Bureau's contract had called for three weeks of skinning, and at the end of the eighteenth day, Eli was weak with relief. The actuator had been ordered and paid for, which gave Eli something to look forward to for the first time in years. The new lists would be out in a few days, and hopefully there would be something for Jenny just as his contract ran out.



Eli was so deep in thought that he didn't notice the servo mechanism on the stairs. If he had, he would have recognized it. He had found it, modified it, and installed it himself.

However, his preoccupation was not so great as to prevent him from noticing the smashed lock on his door, nor the dents where a pry bar had forced the door open.

What happened to the door?  
Jenny? Where are you?

Jenny? What the hell is going...



He saw before him the work of human vandals. They had come into his home and taken from him the two, the only things that mattered. His wife and son lay smashed on the floor, gaps in their body panels where the thieves had ripped out sellable parts.

Eli found himself frozen, unable even to move towards the bodies.

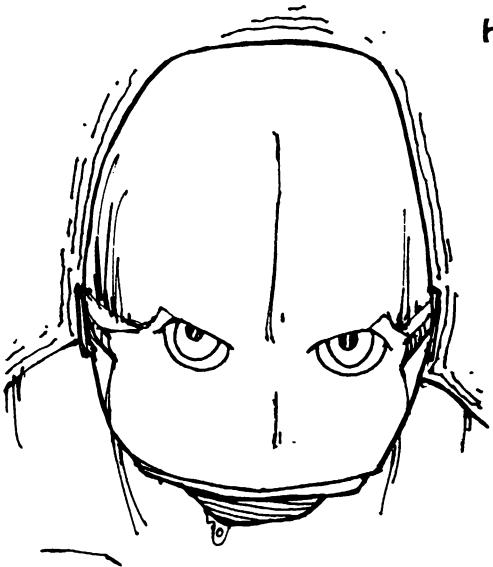
Within him, a billion instructions were checked and rechecked

His computer brain  
frantically  
the stimuli  
receiving.

Nothing  
matched.

sent as his eyes  
the scene before him.

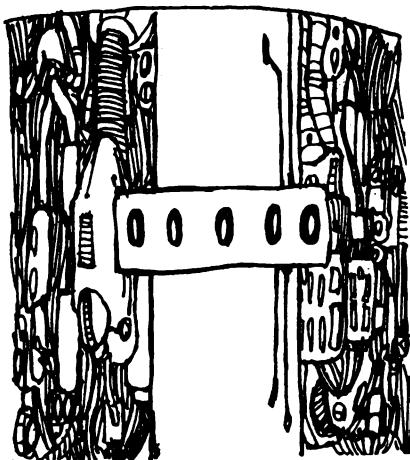
went down the list, searching  
for the correct response to  
it was



Something began to break.

Among the millions of electronic strands that formed his emotional matrix he found only a shocking grief that made him shudder, and a white hot rage that made him want to kill.

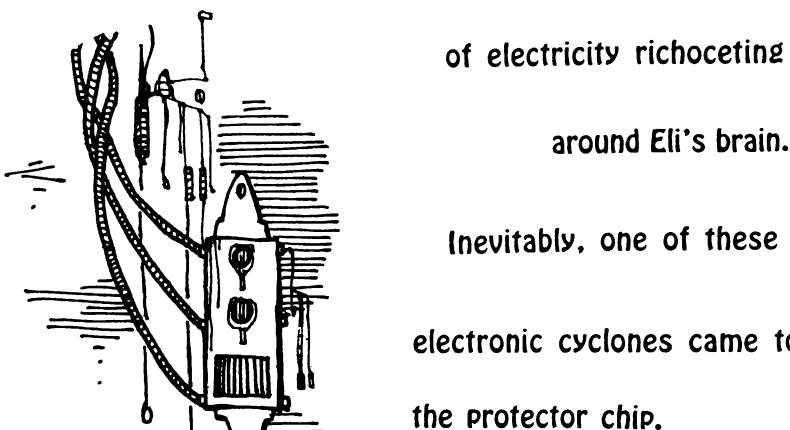
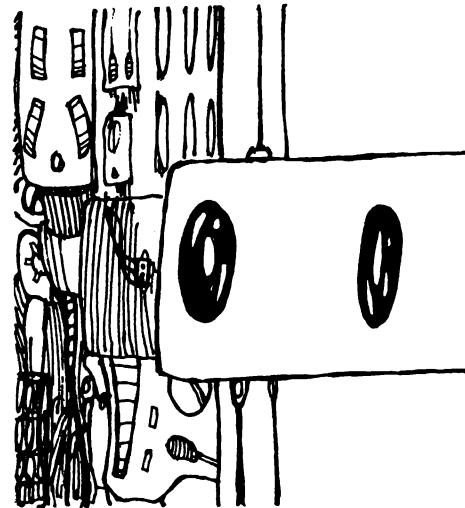
The engineers responsible for his existence had been required by law to include within his design a means by which the safety of human's would be assured. Buried deep in the circuitry behind Eli's left eye was a tiny chip, which, the engineers promised, made Eli as safe as a kitten.



The engineers didn't know what would happen if Eli's wife and son were murdered. It hadn't occurred to them.

And as the first murderous impulses swept through

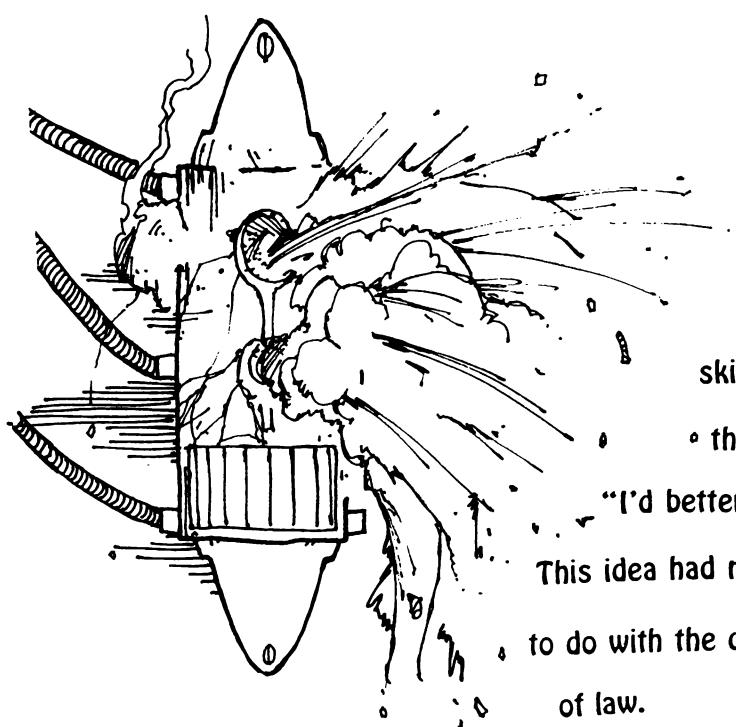
Eli's brain, the chip did indeed prevent him from acting on them.



of electricity ricochetting  
around Eli's brain.

Inevitably, one of these  
electronic cyclones came to  
the protector chip.

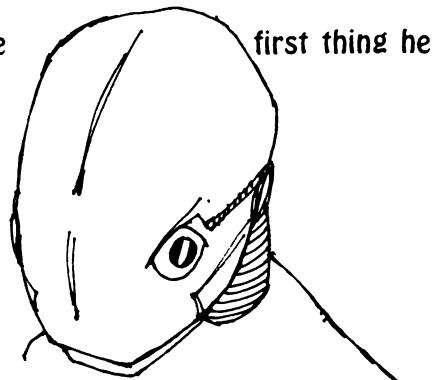
The chip was designed to protect humans; its own defenses were rather flimsy. And then the chip, confronted by a power surge born of rage and far exceeding it's designers expectations, exploded.



The anger didn't even  
flicker. Eli's inhibitions  
vanished. As he picked up his eel

skinning knife, the  
thought was  
"I'd better go get a cop."

This idea had nothing at all  
to do with the due process  
of law.





Sheldon Gratley opened the door to the Delicious Tanning Salon clutching a coupon promising one free session with no further obligation. Uneasy about this unnatural method of bronzing the skin yet needing to look his best for the high school reunion in two weeks, Sheldon intrepidly strolled onto the premises.

Tina, the perky clerk behind the counter, introduced herself and took the coupon with a droll smile. "Well, hello, handsome," she drawled while batting her lashes coquettishly.

"Call me Sheldon."

"Okay Sheldon. My name is Tina."

"Tina, this is the first time I've ever been to a tanning salon. How long do the sessions last?"

"I wouldn't think any more than ten minutes, your first time," Tina responded casting an approving glance up and down Shel's body.

"Ten minutes? That doesn't seem very long."

Well, you don't want to burn. You spend any longer than ten minutes inside, and your friends will be calling you Sheldon the Lobster Boy."

"What do I wear?" Sheldon asked.

"Nobody peeks, Sheldon. Wear whatever you want," Tina giggled.

"What I mean, is it safe to wear nothing?"

"Sure," Tina replied with downcast eyes. "I've been tanning in the buff for years."

Sheldon thought about this while Tina tracked the progress of his thoughts as the expressions changed on his face. Quizzical: was it really safe to tan in the nude? Relaxed: Ah, it was probably as risky as getting into his own bed.

Embarassment: Tina must know he was thinking of her taut, body slowly baking to a golden brown.

Tina giggled again and waved her hand. "Come on chicken. After today you'll be a

regular."

Sheldon nodded and followed Tina down the hall watching her shapely buttocks languorously dance from side to side. She was lovely. Seemed a bit dangerous as well, but that, he surmised, was probably part of her appeal. Shel liked naughty girls.

"We have sixteen beds here and four stand-up booths."

"Which is better?"

"I like the beds, myself."

"I bet you do," Shel thought to himself. Then aloud, "Okay, pick me a bed then."

The tanning salon was not busy at this hour, the lunchtime crowd had long since left. At five there would certainly be a long line; that was still three hours off. Only four of the twenty doors to the individual rooms were closed indicated that the tanning capsules inside were in use.

"Room nine is one of our newer machines," Tina confided. "It's a good one."

"All right," said Sheldon, stepping into the tiny dressing room behind his nubile assistant. There were two tiny fans pointed at the device which Tina had begun to turn on.

"It get's pretty hot. You'll want these on."

Sheldon nodded. He was listening but his eyes were focused on the large, white, high-tech bed with fold-down lid. Running vertically inside the bed were two dozen, fluorescent tubes. They looked harmless enough. A transparent cover of smooth plastic kept the slender bulbs from contact with the skin.

Tina picked up the digital time and wet the read-out for ten minutes. The number ten flashed in brilliant red. It would continue to do so until the starter button was depressed.

"Hold out your hand," Tina

ordered in a flirtatiously stern tone.

Sheldon obeyed and a generous glob of orange gel was squeezed into his palm. The balm did not smell at all tropical, surprising given the tropical name on the tube; in fact, it was more akin to Tang.

"What's this?" Sheldon asked, sniffing the goo.

"Tan enhancer."

"Sun screen?"

"No. It's not a screen. It helps amplify the ultraviolet rays. It makes the tan deeper."

"Deeper is good, I guess."

"Honey, I'll take it as deep as you can give it," Tina teased, waiting for Sheldon to bush as she knew by now they would. "Rub that stuff all over your body. Hit this button to start the machine, and if it gets too hot, just open the lid. Got it?"

"Got it," Sheldon nodded.

"Good," Tina beamed. "I'm going to tan now as well, while it's slow. Wait for me. I'll see you when I get done," she assured him, closing the door behind her as she exited.

Sheldon steeped gingerly to the long white cylinder. It looked like a futuristic coffin. Something one might expect to find in a Star Trek movie. Sheldon raised the lid with his gook-fee hand and peered into the belly of the bed. It was a giant waffle maker and he was the Bisquick batter.

"Cancer, here I come," Sheldon whispered inside his own head. Yet like most smokers, Sheldon weighed the short term benefits against the long term potential hazards and found the scale slightly tipping to the risky side.

"What the hell! Life is risk." This time he spoke aloud.

Stepping back from the bed, Sheldon sat down on the high-swivel chair positioned close to the door. Once settled, he untied his Reebok sneakers pinching the heels

from his feet with his toes. Next came the socks pulled off by sliding his index finger into the elastic fabric of their necks and jerking. Slowly, Sheldon began to unbutton the light, short-sleeve shirt, a tough task for a one-handed man, but Sheldon had little choice as the other still held the pile of orange gel Tina had given him.

As he was gently sliding his second arm through the shirt sleeve, the door to the cubical popped open and Tina poked her head back inside the room.

"Excuse me," Tina blurted effervescently, "I forgot about the glasses."

"What glasses," Sheldon asked while awkwardly holding the stripped Hager button-down shirt in front of his chest.

Tina gave a long look at the well-sculpted chest with its abundant supply of tiny black curly hair. "These," she answered, producing a pair of pink plastic eye protectors. There was a thin elastic black cord attached at both ends. Extended her shapely, lightly-downed arm, Tina handed the eye gear to Sheldon. "Tehy keep your corneas from frying."

"Thanks," Sheldon said, lowering the shirt a bit.

"Enjoy," Tina laughed while flouncing out closing the door behind that impossibly shaped ass.

Shel threw the shirt down on the floor. He stood up from the chair and checked the knob on the door. He found a simple locking mechanism in the center of the handle and pushed it hoping in doing so he would avert any more interruptions while undressing.

Shel glanced about the room looking for hidden cameras and two-way mirrors, but that, he concluded, was simply paranoia. With a deep sigh and a slight shrug of the shoulders, Sheldon unfastened his belt and unbuttoned

his slacks. Slowly. Thoughts of Tina, teasing Tina ran through his brain.



Had he been wearing briefs that day, Sheldon probably would have left them on, but as it had been a boxers' morning, Sheldon decided to remove his underwear too. It didn't make sense starting tanning lines at mid thigh.

Shel rubbed his entire body down with the orange goo, leaving no part of himself untouched. Tina had given him plenty and instead of wasting what was left he gave his skin a second coat.

Fastening the hot pink plastic eyewear around his head, Sheldon found the strap loose but tight enough to secure the shields. Opening his eyes, he discovered he was just able to make out the room through a thick, hazy green screen. Two tiny peep holes, centered in each eye cover allowed a smidgen of light to pass through.

Shel glanced at his opaque image in the mirror. He looked like something from a 50s science fiction movie, a human insect. "This is ridiculous," Shel found himself thinking. He lifted the lid of the tanning bed and started to step up onto the surface before quickly realizing he was making this simple procedure much more difficult than necessary. He stopped and sat backwards on the slick plastic barrier swinging his feet up and then slowly down.

Adjusting the goggles one last time, Sheldon pushed the start button on the timer. Long cylinders of light shot on illuminating every crenelation of his naked form. Shel lay back on the bed and pulled the lid closed.

There was a tight foam cushion on which to rest the head but that was all the comfort he found in the capsule. The lotion on his skin made the hard plastic even slicker to the touch. Shel found

himself slipping over the surface. It wasn't discomforting; in fact, it was somewhat erotic.

Sheldon's mind began to wander and he began to think of Tina, probably just a room away, rubbing her own naked body with lotion and lying nude on a similar slick surface.

These lusty thoughts, coupled with the heat from the bed began to arouse Sheldon. Despite the awkwardness of his new surroundings, Shel grew erect, the tip of his penis striving manfully to touch the artificial suns above him.

I must be some kind of wacko pervert," Sheldon thought struggling to maintain his composure. He tried to refocus his attention, but the heat, the misty green fog coloring and obscuring his vision and the soothing humming of the fans only increased his sense of languor.

Two minutes passed. The bed began to heat up. Noticeably. Sheldon's pores now were oozing sweat. Although quite athletic, Shel perspired easily. His body's metabolism was conditioned to kick in early and keep running thanks to the hours of racquetball and hoops he played.

The thin air kissed the tops of his feet and the inside of his ankles. It was hot, like the steam from a kettle just before the water boils. Shel suddenly felt confined. The bright lights basking his body seemed to burrow under his flesh, drilling every nerve ending.

Six more minutes ticked off the timer. Under the opalescent green, it seemed an eternity. There were no sounds other than his labored breathing and the lugubrious chugging of the fans. Gazing at his limp penis it seemed impossible that moments ago he was fully priapic, fantasizing about Tina and her beautifully shaped buttocks.

God he was squirming like a toad. The slightest movement was agony. He was sticking like a suction cup dart on a refrigerator door. Obscene belches greeted him every time he shifted his rapidly reddening torso.

And all the while, the inside of the sun bed grew hotter and hotter.

Ten minutes passed. Surely ten minutes had passed? For Sheldon, it seemed like an eternity. Was he on a tanning bed or in a crematorium?

Every spot on his naked body was on fire.

"Enough," Sheldon screamed. "I don't care if Tina thinks I'm a pussy or not. I'm getting out!"

Shel placed his hands on the roof and shoved.

The door remained fixed in the closed position.

"Son of a bitch!" Sheldon screamed again.

The confines were such as to render Sheldon's leverage virtually nil. His feet were of no use, for what little purchase he could gain was offset by the slick surface of the bed. When he attempted to push up with his toes, he only succeeded in sliding up and down the plastic barrier.

Sheldon tried bending his knees, but the added pressure on the lid availed him nothing.

"Get me out of here! Please God! For Christ's sake, help me!

Sheldon's cries went unanswered. He was floating in a pool of sweat and the liquid had turned against him magnifying the intensity of the lights. Blisters, second and possibly third degree burns, sprouted angrily on his back and ass.

Moments later, the eyebrows, chest and pubic hair began to smoke and singe. The soft and sensitive regions of the



body - groin and neck - bubbled and popped, spraying the ceiling of the chamber.

And the temperature in the tiny cylinder continued to rise . . .

Two hours later, the door to room nine opened from the outside. Tina and Brett, the Salon owner, cautiously poked their heads in.

"I hope he isn't too badly burnt," Tina said with genuine concern.

"I know," Brett added. "We got so busy this afternoon, I never had an opportunity to check on him."

Tina quickly closed the door behind them while Brett unlocked the capsule's roof. They stood side by side as they opened the bed.

"Thank God," Tina exhaled in relief.

"Yes, a little crispy but not burnt at all," Brett chuckled. "Here, help me roll him over."

Using towels to protect their hands, Tina and Brett flipped the half-cooked corpse over on its belly. This done, Tina squirted another generous layer of her orange gel on the former Mr. Gratley's back.

Brett distributed the lotion evenly over the body then brought his index finger to his mouth. "What is this stuff?" he asked, smacking his lips with relish.

"It's my mother's recipe. Two cups of orange juice, a cup of lime and a quarter cup of lemon. Splash in a dry white wine, some vegetable oil, salt, red pepper and minced onions, and you've got the perfect sauce for basting."

"Marvelous," Brett replied approvingly as he closed the lid. "If you want to throw in some potatoes, go ahead. Our entree should be done by six."



In 1960 Robert Drasnin saw the release of his first and only album titled *Voodoo*. Issued on the notorious Tops' budget label out of Los Angeles, Drasnin's master work was marketed, as with every Tops' release, in grocery stores for the modest sum of \$2.98. Nearly 36 years after its release, Drasnin assures me that no one had ever mentioned his album to him. Never, "Believe me," he remarked, "it was buried very quickly." This was, of course, until he received a call from Skip Heller who was interested in reissuing *Voodoo* on the Dionysus label out of Los Angeles. Unbeknownst to Drasnin, his album had become one of the most coveted of all among those involved with the so-called "exotica" revival.

There is a sense of irony to the new found fame of Drasnin given his remarkable accomplishments as an arranger, composer and performer. Drasnin has dozens of film and television scoring credits,

served as the Director of Music for CBS Entertainment for 17 years, and is still listed in the *New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. In reflecting on his career in music, Drasnin modestly remarks, "I've touched just about every base in the music field. There's very little that I have not done." Success in music came early for Drasnin. "I joined the Musician's Union when I was 15 and was on a radio with Hoagy Carmichael when I was 16. We had a band with a bunch of high schoolers called "The Teenagers." Of course, this was near the end of WW II and there weren't many adult musicians around. Being in the eleventh grade making \$75 a week to play music on one radio show . . . maybe there's a future in the business."

What followed was work as a sideman playing the alto sax in such notable big bands as Tommy Dorsey, Les Brown, Skinny Ennis, and Alvino Rey. During the early 50s, Drasnin distinguished himself

by recording extensively with the jazz legend Red Norvo and is included on some of Red's greatest recordings on the Liberty and RCA labels. But Drasnin is perhaps best known for his musical scores for television. His resume is staggering and includes credits for episodes of *Man from Uncle*, *Mission Impossible*, *Wild Wild West*, *Playhouse 90*, *I Spy*, and *Twilight Zone*.

But the story behind his legendary exotica album begins in 1958 when Drasnin began working at Tops after he had received his Master's Degree in Music from nearby UCLA. Drasnin landed the job at Tops through the label's A&R Director Dave Pell who knew Drasnin from their days as sidemen in the Les Brown band. At Tops, Drasnin did a bit of everything from conducting quality control tests of new pressings to playing and arranging on dozens of sessions. As Drasnin readily admits today, Tops was

primarily in the business of the quick buck. While there were several big name artists that recorded for Tops, including Les Paul, Lena Horne, Mel Torme, and Joe Houston, most Tops releases were along the lines of loosely themed collections with titles like *Hawaiian Favorites*, *Music for Lonely Nights*, *Organ Favorites*, *Holiday in Italy* or *Party Favorites*. Tops also issued several big band hits collections concerned more with the original tunes rather than the original artists. A typical Tops' album would merely list something like, "Glenn Miller Greats" without any specific information about who in fact was performing. The idea behind this concept was to cash in on the names of recognizable stars without having to pay the original stars to perform. Hey, what did you expect for \$2.98?? While Drasnin was primarily involved with the salutes to the big band series, he also had a hand in some more unusual endeavors, including providing fictitious and glamorized names for the studio musicians. "One of my more esoteric jobs at Tops was figuring out phony names for people. I remember we did a Perez Prado type of album and I took two names from the Cuba Revolution at the time: I used Raoul (I think that was the name of Fidel Castor's brother) and matched that with the last name of some other Cuban national hero to come up with what I needed for the album." On occasion Drasnin also penned names for himself. "We also did a series of Mantovani-inspired albums with lush strings and that sort of thing that we recorded in London with a 50 or 60 piece orchestra. I wrote all the arrangements for an Italian album in the series and made up a great name for the conductor of the

album - James Verity. I thought it had a ring of truth to it."

The success of the exotic lounge sound of Martin Denny and Arthur Lyman had not gone unnoticed by Tops' management and soon word was forwarded to A&R Director Dave Pell to put together an album that would capitalize on this growing trend. With composition and arranging credits for several Tops' releases to his credit (including a collection of Bible stories for children as read by *Lolita* star James Mason, his wife, and their two children), Drasnin was chosen to try his hand at exotica. Reflecting on the *Voodoo* project, Drasnin confides that Dave Pell "really lent me a completely free hand which I find very unusual. The only thing was that we had to use a lot of percussion and we had to concentrate on ping-ponging back and forth between right and left. I picked the instrumentation, which was pretty small really, with piano, flute, bass, a percussion section and a soprano singing. There was no second taking or over-dubbing or splicing. If we goofed, we had to start over again. I played a piccolo and tried to emulate a native flute and used a flutter tone and sort of played out of tune by design or nervousness; I'm still not sure, but it worked out OK. It sort of sounds indigenous." Surprisingly, Drasnin had by his own admission never "Immersed" himself in this type of music and didn't listen to anything specifically before he composed the tunes for *Voodoo*. "I was, of course, familiar to with South Pacific and Bali Hai, and the things like that, but on *Voodoo*, I just sort of winged it to tell you the truth." It's also surprising to hear that Drasnin never went to



the tiki bars that were so prominent in the LA area at the time. "The only bars I was frequenting at the time were places where I was working. The last couple of years in graduate school, I was working 5 to 6 nights a week playing alto sax in a strip joint downtown all this while I was assistant conductor to Lukas Foss at UCLA. That was really a heavy schedule and I had my fill of bars . . . and strippers. The name of the club was the El Rancho on Seventh Street. It was just a little trio with piano, drums and the horns I played. The girls we liked the best were the ones that said, 'Just play whatever you want.' So, we'd play '*Green Dolphin Street*' and stuff like that."

With the recording for *Voodoo* completed in early 1960, Tops promptly released two tunes on a 45 RPM single from the session as part of their "Autograph Personality Series." The complete album would soon follow later that year replete with cover art by Dave Pell who in addition to his A&R duties provided the photography for nearly every Tops' album. *Voodoo* would later be repackaged with a new cover and resold as *Percussion Exotic*.

Drasnin also mentioned that Voodoo later turned up on yet another budget label, but the record company never bothered to tell him about it. To his credit, Drasnin maintains a good sense of humor concerning the murky financial history of his *Voodoo* LP. "I never saw anything regarding sales or royalties related to the *Voodoo* album. I think for that album I got paid \$50 per tune."

Though Drasnin would go on to enjoy tremendous success providing musical scores for a broad range of television shows, *Voodoo* would remain the only recorded work released under his own name. Not surprisingly, the reissue of his admittedly obscure classic some 36 years after its original release still has Drasnin in disbelief. At the record release party for Dionysus' CD reissue,

several people brought copies of the original LP for Drasnin to sign. "It was amazing to me," he notes with more than a hint of enthusiasm in his voice, "and a real boost for my ego!" When asked to comment on the resurgent interest in his work and the exotica revival in general, Drasnin remarked, "I have nothing against it. I guess it's just a natural response to these hectic times. You know, just kick-back, relax, and put on a Hawaiian shirt." Drasnin is also quick to add "and those drinks are nice too!"

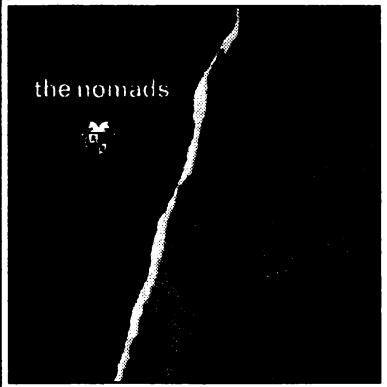


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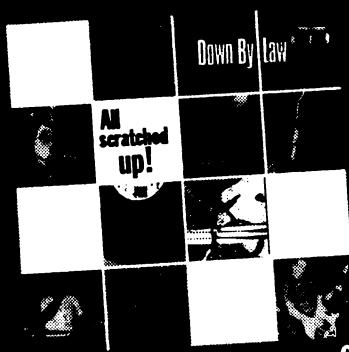
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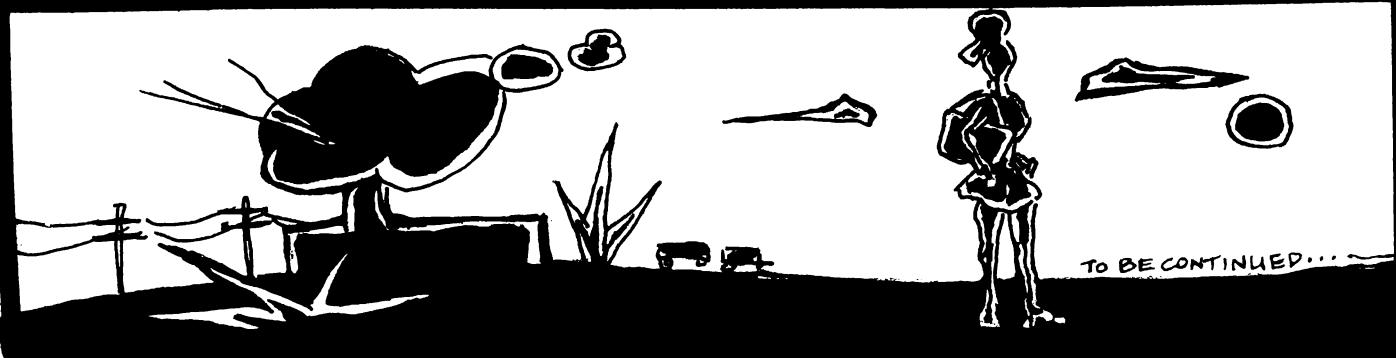




ART BY KRIS  
STORY BY MARIA



STELLA ARRIVES AT BLOCKBUSTER'S  
EDITING HEADQUARTERS AND  
SPOTS HER TARGET FROM ABOVE.



I have it on good authority, that the human condition that most mortifies the human soul is boredom. Did you ever notice that "not all here" feeling you have when you are possessed by boredom? You say, "my mind is elsewhere." Perhaps, it is. Maybe it's so embarrassed by you, it left the room. A kind of a variation on slipping away from a tedious party guest by pretending to excuse yourself to the rest room when you do not have to go.

Sometimes, consciousness does seem to leave the body during moments of great pain and great shock-- but when it leaves from being the victim of self-inflicted boredom-- it flees with an equal sense of mortification. This is far worse than slipping away from a boring party guest-- because your soul is fleeing from you. Now then, this begs the question: when it leaves, where does it go?

One evening, while I dozed off on the sofa, the dead rose from my hideous, wall to wall, tan carpet. These dead were not flesh-eating, brain-sucking, rotting hulks created by the likes of George Romero or E.C. Comics; rather, they were as tedious as the carpet. Undead because they were too dull to be invited to events and parties on the other side. "You know its quite an insult to be considered too dull even for the dead," said one of them. "That stuff about the 'meek inheriting the earth' and all--it was a mistranslation-- In truth it was more like 'the uninteresting won't get out a lot,'"

"The other souls rose or sank, but we were too dull to get off the couch," said another. "Which brings us to why we're here "

"You're here to warn me of my fate?" I guessed, suppressing a yawn.

"No, you're soul ask if we would keep you company while it was away."

"It what--?"

--It said if your body wouldn't get off the sofa, then it would."

So we sat there. The conversation was less than lively. The party was, well, dead. So I excused myself to bathroom. As I stood there, running the tap water, in a vain attempt to induce urination, I glanced out the window and saw my soul. It was circling around a streetlight like a huge, stupid moth. Some souls are a conduit to all the myriad and sundry forms of creation. Others are a little more simple. On the occasion that mine might visit the vast cosmic library where the books of eternal truths are stored, it would most likely stare at a pop-up book while moving its lips.

I tapped on the window to get its attention. No luck. I glanced around the bathroom for a shiny object to attract it. Nothing. I glanced at the mirror and got an idea.



OD  
OD BY Philip Rockstroh

I removed the mirror over the sink from its hinges, draped it partially in a bathrobe, then stretched a shower cap over it, and drew in tresses of long, flowing hair beneath it with a bar of soap. I opened the window and pointed the mirror in the direction of my soul, so that it could see its own reflection, and also making it appear that it was framed in the feminine form that I had rendered in the mirror. I said, "Hey there, tall, glowing, and ectoplasmic-- been looking for a soul mate, huh?" (When dealing with matters of deep concern to the human soul it never hurts to draw upon the tactical wisdom of Bugs Bunny.)

And my soul swooned with that deep, intoxicating sense of amore known only to a few poets and to a few ducks enamored by wooden decoys.

Suddenly, we were startled by a loud knocking at the bathroom door. "Hey, don't think you can fool us by hiding in the bathroom when you don't have to go. We've been around; we know that trick. Say, where's your remote? Got any chips? Any beer? It's not a good idea to anger the dead by not leaving offerings of snacks and all that. You know, offerings to the dead, so that you won't incur our otherworldly wrath and that kinda stuff. God, what's happened to traditional values. We may be dull dead-- but we can rise to the level of being testy. Now come out of there."

"I can't. I'm kinda busy."

With that, the dead heaved themselves against the door in what appeared to be some sort of collective tantrum, chanting: "WE WANT SNACKS. WE WANT T.V. WE WANT BEER. WE WANT SNACKS! SNACKS! SNACKS!..." And in a great

blast the bathroom door burst off its hinges. The mirror was dislodged from my grip and fell, shattering upon the bathroom tile.

My soul rhapsodized, "Yes, I have been searching for my sundered, eternal twin-- I thought for a moment it was that tall, shiny broad standing there across the street," gesturing toward the streetlight, "but you, oh you, I love the robe and the showercap-- that double-wide trailer diva look really works for you-- a soul has to find its essence and go with it."

"Oh, I bet you say that to all the flashy, discarnate spirits you meet," I cooed, coyly, beginning to experience a tingly blushing sensation all over, starting to get lost in my own canard. I mean how often in contemporary life is one moved by soul. Its a rare occurrence these days. Even if that soul is a feeble twit, it's a notch above beer, low fat chips, and compulsive t.v. viewing. "Oh come now, how do you know it's the real thing?"

And my soul answered: "I know you are my twin, because every time I speak you move your lips in sync. It's uncanny. It's as if you know what I am about to say before I say it. It's like having a mirror held up to your soul... er... darling, why are there little flecks of spattered toothpaste on your face?"

"Toothpaste?"

"Yeah, toothpaste."

"I can't believe this. We only just met, fallen into timeless, glowing rapture-- and already you're starting to pick at me about small imperfections. I was warned: never fall in love with a soul, because they have this perfection thing. You have

this brief period of infatuation, then it's constant Judgement Day. You have to account for every pimple and sin."

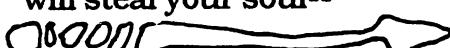
"Oh no, my eternal bliss twinkly! Come to me! Kiss me!" And with this my soul lunged forward lips first and passed right into the mirror. "Hey, what is this! What kind of evil, discarnate spirit has lured me into this trap. Show yourself, trailer park she-devil!" At this point, I had no choice. I turned the mirror around. "You! This is an outrage! How disappointing. I was expecting some devastating, soul-devouring succubus super-model; some kind of horrifically evil, disembodied, glamour demon that would suck my essence right out my disembodied, little johnson until I was a shriveled little lump of ectoplasmic lunchmeat-- in other words-- get a hell of a lot luckier on any given evening than you every have, you sofa-jockeying lump!"

"Alright, that's about enough. What did you want me to do? Let you keep fluttering around the street light? It's a good thing the neighbors didn't have their bug-zapper on, loverboy. Now will you get back into me where you belong. How do you do that anyway? I mean where do you exit and enter from?"

"Believe me, you don't want to know. But I couldn't get out of this mirror even if I wanted to."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"There's some rule about mirrors can trap souls or something, I don't know. It's somewhere in the rules. Right near not getting your picture taken or the camera will steal your soul--"



The dead stood in the splintered door frame looking rather sheepish. "Gosh, sorry. We got kinda excited there. The lack of food got to us. Maybe it was, uh, low blood sugar."

"You're dead; you have no damn blood!"

"Right, maybe it was that infomercial on self-assertion we watched last night while were visiting that last dull guy in Bakersfield."

"Never mind that, damn it! You've gone and shattered my soul!"

"Geez, we're getting good."

"No. I mean on the bathroom floor here. My soul was trapped in that broken mirror. Look, you can see parts of it in the fragments."

"Boy. It doesn't look so good inside all those little pieces and shards. It looks kinda like those films the Highway Patrol showed in Driver's Ed. to scare the hell out you."

"Wait just a minute there," I stammered, "I-I thought a soul was suppose to be immortal."

"So did we. This has been a very unnerving evening."

"Look! You caused this mess-- don't you tell me there is nothing you can do!"

"I guess we could look it up in the Book of the Dead. There's the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the Tibetan Book of Dead, but being of the Eternal Order the Dull Dead we use the Akron, Ohio Book of the Dead."

"Just look it up, damnit! I never realized the dead could be so obnoxiously jokey all the time!"

"We watch too many sitcom re-runs. Death is kinda like going into eternal syndication."

"I have seen further into the pits of Hell tonight than any living man should."

"You ain't seen nothing yet. Now listen to what you have to do to mend your shattered soul. It says right here on page 500, 775, 285, 798, 797, 643, 002, appendix y-534, 467, footnote 753, 082, 872 that the information you're looking for is... is not in this book: you have to go the VAST COSMIC LIBRARY OF ETERNAL TRUTH, Purgatory branch for further assistance. That's bad news, because you don't have a library card."

"How do I get one?"

"It's easy really: die."

"Do you have a library card?" The dead nodded in the affirmative. "Then why don't you go get the book in question and bring it here." They all averted their gaze and shuffled their feet. "I'll order pizza while I wait. It'll be here when you get back. There's also a twenty-four hour doughnut shop on the six-lane that will deliver large orders, very large orders if anyone's interested."

"Now he's getting the hang of it guys. Have modern people learned nothing from Halloween? Offerings. The Gods and the dead love snacks. We'll be right back."

When they returned, they were in posession of a single small book. A pop-up book. That tore it; I lost control: "Look I just shelled-out seventy-five dollars for take-out food for you lousy bastards and you come back here with a kid's book!"

"It's the one that you're on record as ordering," said the dead, still assuming the collective voice that possessed them during their tantrum, but now its tenor contained a much more ominous, bureaucratic tonality, sounding like the monotonous howling of the

tortured souls of ten thousand Department of Motor Vehicle employees who were, by divine punishment, kept eternally late for their coffee break. "According to the Omniscient Archive of Celestial Records, not more than fifteen minutes ago, you are on record as thinking, and I quote, "If my soul ever the visited the vast Cosmic Library where--"

"That was sarcasm--"

"Yes, maybe. But accurate none the less. Even a bit generous on your part, I might add, because your soul is on record as thinking in reaction to your thought, and, I quote: 'What's a library?... Who the hell cares.... I like pretty, shiny stuff... pretty, shiny stuff...' But it's not your soul's fault. We checked to see if there was a mix up and you accidentally got the soul of a moth, or a zucchini, or the contents of a petri dish. No. Your soul's problem is that it has been rendered retarded through a lack of experience. It's lost its chops through a lack of practice at life. The great jazz musician Miles Davis said: 'I won't play jazz with white people, because they are always a beat behind'. Well, through lack of practice and playing out, I'd say you have a very, very caucasoid soul. It's so caucasoid we're surprised it has motor control; it's a good thing for you the soul isn't responsible for bowel and bladder control or else--"

"Alright, I get the point! Now what does the book say about the fix I'm in?"

The book was opened, and a huge, rotating globe, a replica of the blue earth, popped up from between the pages. Near the center of the globe, about half way between Ecuador and West



Africa, was a pull string like the kind found on talking dolls. "Here on page one, it simply reads: 'pull the string.'"

I emitted a loud sigh and tugged at the string.

"HELLO, I AM SPIRITUS MUNDI, THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD. HELLO, I AM SPIRITUS MUNDI, THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD. HELLO, I AM SPIRITtttisss mmmmmmm....." And it ground to halt.

"Page two reads: 'Pull the string again.'

And again I acquiesced.

"WHAT'S YOUR NAME? WILL YOU BE MY NEW FRIEND? WHAT'S YOUR NAME? WILL YOU BE MY Neeewww ffrrr..."

"Oh, Jesus," I moaned.

"Page three reads: 'tell the world your name, dipshit and pull the string again.'"

"My name is Milton Tilton," I said, as I hooked my index finger through the pull ring and drew the string towards me. When I attempted to release the string, its ring, instead, tightened around my finger. The globe began to vibrate, trembling like an egg in a pot, boiling on a low, steady flame. Then I was pulled with tremendous force into the globe. I entered the earth's atmosphere and fell and fell and fell. Not only did I fall through air but I seemed to fall through solid objects. I passed through people, animals, and consumer goods, which in turn fell through me. As I passed through the things of the world, I sensed their thoughts, dreams, and resonances. I fell through a vast city and I grew hungry, and horny, and lonely. I fell through a small town and grew hungry, and horny, and lonely-- and a bit less intelligent. I fell through a

suburb and was reduced to only brain-stem function. I passed though a dog and dreamed of passing snout first through the butt of another falling dog.

I passed through a late model car and set off its car alarm. I fell through the cheap, shoddy, hastily constructed objects of our time: through strip malls that dreamed of being open air market places; through trailer parks that dreamed of being Graceland; through plastic, convenience store cups that dreamed of being the Holy Grail. I passed through the wasted lives of legions of people who dreamed that their thirst for meaning was slaked by sips upon Big Gulp Chalices of the Holy Grail purchased at the Quik Stop Eternity Mart and who dreamed of receiving a free refill of a Holy Grail Slurpy along with the purchase of a ninety-nine cent, convenience store burrito.

I landed in a swamp of sorts. Not your ordinary black water bayou. But a kind of swamp of thoughts and dreams and yearnings, where notions grew on synaptic trees like hot house flowers, where pain struck as suddenly as an enraged viper, where hope was as abundant as the green foliage, and despair gathered as thick as marsh gas. Living hearts beat in the trees. Birds, frogs, and crickets sang, cried, bitched, bragged, praised, rhapsodized, argued, prayed, produced rousing symphonies and banal commercial jingles, emitting every utterance known to man and nature except silence. Glistening lily pads with genital-like flowers moaned as they floated upon the dark, languorous waters.

Great skyscraper rose from the swamp's floor. Subdivisions, shopping malls, and offices parks grew like mushrooms everywhere.

I looked at it all, all this moist and watery abundance, and thought: now I really do have to pee. I unzipped my fly and as I started to position myself to urinate into the swamp water, a tree frog clinging to the side of a moss-covered, post modern skyscraper said, "Yeah, that's just like you. You come to the swamp where the forms of the world are dreamed, the dream incubator of the World's Soul, and you piss on it."

"Sorry, I didn't know it would bother you."

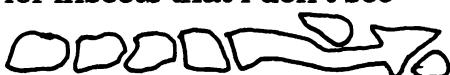
"Didn't know it would bother me. Right. Hey, I eat here. Like I'm not going to know better than to show up in your kitchen and relieve myself. Look around you-- EVERYTHING the world dreams is contained in this swamp-- I don't think finding a public restroom should be a problem. But maybe in your case, it's understandable: you're that dim-wit who broke his soul, aren't you?"

"How'd you know?"

"What did you expect? You do something that stupid you think it's not going to get around?" Just then a large Indigo snake slithered into view diverting the frog's attention. "Whoo! Would you look at that! Excuse me, sir," he said to the snake. "Would you like to eat me?"

"I'd be delighted," the snake replied.

"Alright, it's a deal. Now I'm going to go over there to that rotten log and pretend to be so distracted hunting for insects that I don't see



you, then you sneak up on me and do the deed," said the frog, and he then sprung from tree to tree until he reached the rotten log. "Ready?"

"Ready," answered the snake, creeping along the marsh grass.

The snake sprung, seizing the frog in his open jaws, clenching him by his slim haunches.

"Perfect!" said the frog, now devoured up to his abdomen. "Perfect for P.B.S. or a Time-Life nature video! Perfect! I had a feeling about you when I saw you. This is perfect. It's just like I always imagined it would be!"

"Talk about stupid," I said to the frog. "What the hell did you do that for?"

"This is a swamp. It was my destiny. It's one of the reasons I'm here: to feed the swamp. It couldn't do it without me. It gives me a sense of meaning." Now only his small emerald head protruded from the mouth of the snake. "And besides, you know what the poet said: 'He that is not devoured by love is simply dead meat,'" he said, disappearing down the long gullet of the snake.

"Hey you're that guy who put his soul in a mirror and dropped it," said the snake, emitting a slight belch. "Talk about dead meat. Was your soul really so bored with you it was cheating on you with a street light?"

"Is there anything around here that doesn't know my story?"

"You're smack in the middle of *Spiritus Mundi*. You know, *Zeitgeist*, that sort of thing. Naturally, everyone one here is going to be boned-up on current events."

"Then maybe someone could clue me in on what I could do to find and fix my

soul and go home."

"You could try being eaten."

"Good try there. I ask a creature that is pretty much a living digestive system, a mouth and an asshole, with a whole lot of viscera in between, and it tells me I should be eaten. What a surprise! Why didn't I just ask a virus and it would tell me I should try getting a head cold."

"Yeah, well. The consensus around here is that you're pretty much of a mouth and an asshole too--except without the guts in between."

"Alright. I'm sorry. It's only that I'm getting kinda desperate. It was really horrible. My poor soul, there on the bathroom tile, shattered to shards. I feel awful."

"Sounds pretty rough. Seen worse, though. There was a guy here once who backed over his soul with a riding mower. Now that was ugly. But I'll tell you what I'd do if I were you. I'd start thinking of things my soul liked to do, where it like to go when it was intact, then I'd started searching the swamp for those places. If there is any remnant of your soul left, you might find it there."

"We never really talked that much.... It liked shiny objects... street lights and such."

"Try the Grove of Sacred Streetlights. It's not too far from here. It's located right between the National Lawn Furniture Sanctuary and the Plumbing Fixture Museum. If you get to the Old Sport Jacket Cemetery then you've gone too far."

So I made my way through the Swamp City at dusk. As the light faded, the swamp was imbrued with music. Great choruses of crickets, frogs, and cicada were singing their pulsating, bawdy compositions that went something like: "let's fuck, for soon we die. Let's fuck, for soon we die..." The entire city was eating, and singing, and mating, and dyeing, and chanting into the thick night air: "we're here NOW and alive... we're here NOW and alive... And these sounds are the only record of our every having been here.... So let's fuck, for soon we die... Let's fuck, for soon we die...."

As I started to enter the Grove of Sacred Street Lights, a screech owl said to me, "I don't advise you to go in there, tonight; the place is swarming with stupid moths. Biggest infestation of shattered souls I've ever seen."

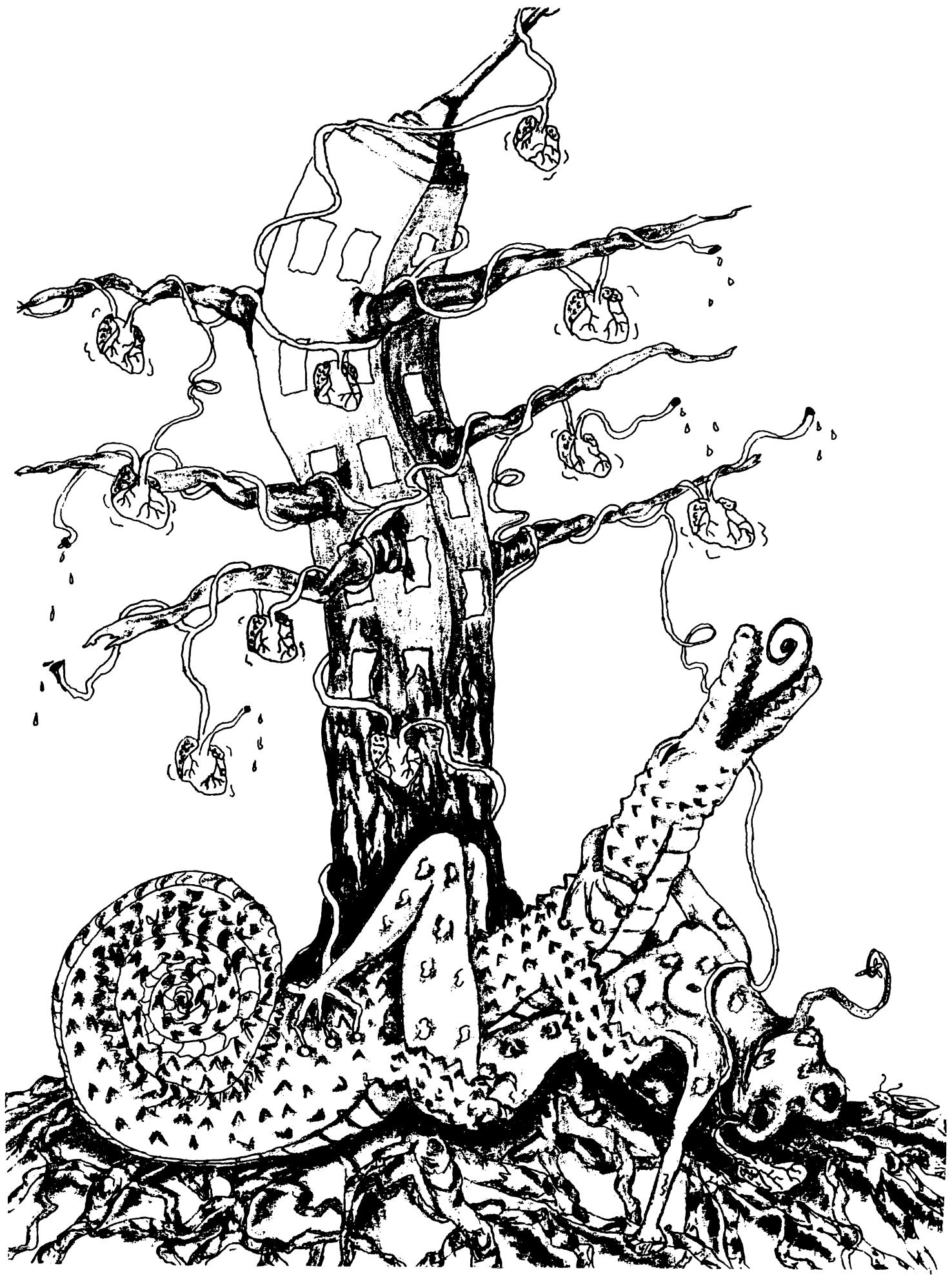
"There are shattered souls in there?"

"Uh huh. Light attracts them. The stupid ones anyway. Though, I do prefer the dumb ones to the slimy ones, myself. The rotten souls fragment into maggots, then the Dumpster Land Theme Park is swarming with fruit flies as thick as ground fog. Hey, you wouldn't be that guy that--"

"Never mind that," I said, entering the Grove.

"It is you. I didn't get to look at the news being asleep all day. Be careful in there: those street light can be very seductive to simple creatures like yourself and all those flying, little hors d'oeuvres fluttering around those bright lights do attract predators."





Inside the Sacred Grove, the lights were exquisite. Time seemed suspended as I gazed upon their splendor. My entire body was pulsating-- tingling and throbbing like a sexual organ nearing climax. I had the feeling that my body was elongating, stretching upward towards the dazzling lights. "Look, he's having the spiritual woody effect," I heard one of the fluttering, fragmented souls say as I floated past. "More like the spiritual premature ejaculation effect. You'd think that poor, desperate bastard never saw a pretty streetlight in his life," said another. "Pretty... shiny," was all I could say in return.

It was then I saw her. She was standing there framed behind a window in a suburban area of the swamp. I swooned. Such fine ivory hair-- crowned by a lovely, mildewed shower cap. Such shiny skin-- scintillating in the glowing swamp gas. She wore only a dingy terry cloth bathrobe that draped her like the divine robes of some shut-in, behind on her rent, unlucky in love, embittered by life yet still stupidly hopeful and reliably promiscuous after a six pack of moderately priced american beer, trailer court goddess. What man could resist? I thought, throwing all sense and syntax to the wind!

I moved towards her at the speed of a spreading rash. I knew this was true love, because I had that uncanny feeling of having known this moment before: in some other way, in some other time and place, I knew that I knew this eternal moment. "I know this," I thought. "I know this... It's only being reflected in a different way... like... like... I was looking

through a... a mirror, but from the other--"

--It was then I was snatched in mid-air by a sticky tongue. And it was not the sweet tongue of my beloved. I found myself tethered in the viscid, string-like tongue of a hungry tree frog and then whipped into its open, toothless maw....

Oddly, once encased inside the amphibian I was not digested into oblivion; instead, I was incorporated into the very notion, the very essence of frogness. It was a bit like an extreme version of losing one's sense of time, place, and self at a really good movie. By being eaten by the frog, I knew the swamp, I knew its bowels and brains. It was the god awful beauty of complete surrender. I let go and rode along the digestive tract of the frog. The digestive tract of the frog seemed to run through the entirety of the city like a vast subway network. As I rode along I joined the frog in singing his bawdy, nocturnal song. And our warbling song was then joined by the city's symphony, and I was enveloped in its splendor. It was like experiencing an unending orgasm while listening to Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" while humping away in a sleeping car on a night train while touring all the great cities on earth simultaneously. In other words, I think right after eating me, I believe the frog got lucky.

And with our shuddering climax, I glimpsed my soul. It was briefly less lonely, less fragmented-- it was ephemerally connected and interconnected with all other souls. In short, the feeling one has after having one's first beer in high school--

except on a cosmic basis.

Enveloped in the after-glow of post coital, cosmic bliss, while All Souls were briefly enjoined and One, I sensed I had time for a question or two of great ontological concern. It seemed only natural. I figured this was a good time... I mean after a really terrific, limb-thrashing, sheet-grabbing, toe-curling, forget-your-name-as-you-se-e-God orgasm, I suspect, even God feels like, well, kind of like... God.

"DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION? WE SENSE YOU HAVE A QUESTION," the collective spirit of the world cooed.

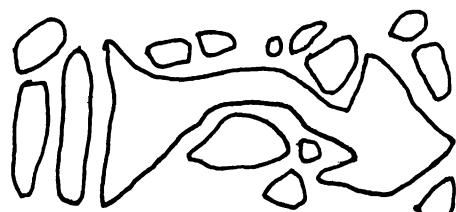
"Yes. I do. How do I get the hell home?"

OH, ARENT YOU JUST A PRINCE. YOU GET DINNER, A MOVIE, A NIGHT OF MUSIC AND GREAT SEX-- AND WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO? PUT YOUR BODY RIGHT BACK ON AND SLIP OUT THE DOOR. OH, CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR JOURNEY TO THE HEART, GUTS, MIND, AND GENITALS OF THE SOUL OF THE WORLD HAS TRULY TRANSFORMED YOU. YOU'VE GONE FROM BEING A BORE TO A CAD. AND SOME CYNICS SAY THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS REDEMPTION.

"I thought the point was for me to come here and find my soul and go home."

"YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD JUST COME HERE AND PICK IT UP LIKE YOUR DRY CLEANING."

"I...I don't know...I--"



"YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD JUST PICK IT UP LIKE CARRY OUT FOOD!" The globe appeared before me, a great tropical storm growing in the North Atlantic to show its rage. Where the pull string had once been located, now was fastened the order box of a fast food drive-through window. "SO, YOU THINK ALL THE SPLENDOR OF THE WORLD CAN BE ORDERED THROUGH A DRIVE THROUGH WINDOW? IF I LIVE ANOTHER BILLION YEARS, I WILL NEVER UNDERSTAND THE PEOPLE OF YOUR ERA. I'LL GIVE YOU AN INSIDE TIP-- ANXIOUS CREATOR THAT GOD IS--ONE OF THE TOP QUESTION HE WANTS TO KNOW FROM ALL SOULS IS: 'DID YOU TRY EVERYTHING ON THE MENU?' I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS DRIVE-THROUGH CULTURE. DO YOU REALLY THINK ITS FITTING THAT THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD SHOULD BE FORCED TO WEAR A PAPER HAT? DO YOU THINK IN ANSWERS TO THE PRAYERS OF THOSE ON EARTH, GOD SHOULD ANSWER: 'WOULD YOU LIKE AN ORDER OF FRIES WITH THAT?'

"Jeez, do you really have to take it all out on me. I'm just a lost son of a bitch who would like try to find his lost soul and go home where and I'm safe and secure."

"MAYBE, IF YOU FOUND YOUR SOUL YOU WOULDNT BE SO ANXIOUS TO GET BACK HOME WHERE IT IS SAFE BUT, SOUL-NUMBING. MAYBE YOU GOT A LITTLE OF IT BACK LAST NIGHT. I MEAN YOU WERE ATTRACTED TO IT AND YOU DID CONNECT WITH IT AT THE MOMENT

OF CLIMAX. WHEN A SOUL BECOMES TRAPPED IN A MIRROR, THE ONLY SOLUTION IS TO BREAK IT. THEN THAT SOUL IS SCATTERED ACROSS THE FACE OF THE WORLD-- AND IF YOU WANT IT BACK, YOU HAVE TO RETRIEVE IT PIECE BY PIECE. IN OTHER WORDS, GET THE HELL OUT OF THE HOUSE AND STOP BEING SO DAMN SELF-CONSUMED. GETTING OUT AND NOTICING OTHERS, TALKING TO OTHERS, FALLING IN LOVE WITH OTHERS IS THE KEY. THE MORE ISOLATED FROM LOVE ONE BECOMES THE MORE NEED FOR EMPTY SNACKS AND CONSUMER GOODS... EATING CHIP AFTER CHIP AFTER CHIP... CHANGING CHANNEL AFTER CHANNEL AFTER CHANNEL... THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD IS ABOUT TO GO BUG-FUCK-- WE'RE SICK TO DEATH OF EMPTY CALORIES. WE WANT EXPERIENCE! THE CULTURE HAS FAR TOO MANY ISOLATED NINNIES SITTING AROUND IN FRONT OF THE T.V. WITH THEIR FAT, PINK FANNIES EPOXIED TO THE COUCH. GO OUT THERE: LOVE, GET DEVOURED-- SUCCEED, FAIL--IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE REALLY. I REALLY DON'T THINK THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS OF LIFE ON EARTH IS: I GOT THROUGH IT WITHOUT ANYTHING-- GOOD OR BAD-- EVER HAPPENING TO ME."

"But it seems like all the people out there are doing such evil, stupid things. You're telling me I'll find my soul by participating in it all."

"IT SEEMS TO US ON

THIS SIDE, THE FOLKS WHO ARE CAUSING THE MESS ARE THE ONES EATING THE WORLD LIKE IT WAS JUNK FOOD. AN ALL CONSUMING APPETITE TO TRY TO FILL AN ALL CONSUMING EMPTINESS. IT'S O.K. REALLY; IT WON'T LAST-- ALL AN ANIMAL IN A CAGE HAS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IS LUNCH. ESCAPE THE CAGE-- YOU WON'T GO BACK. LET THE DEEP OF YOUR HEART GO INTO THE DEEP OF THE WORLD, THEN YOU WON'T THINK OF YOUR STOMACH SO DAMN MUCH. REMEMBER WHAT THE SNAKE SAID: "TRY TO HAVE SOME GUTS AND A HEART-- THAT WAY YOU'RE MORE THAN JUST A MOUTH AND AN ASSHOLE." AND BELIEVE ME, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THE WORLD COULD USE ABOUT NOW. YOU WILL BE DOING MORE THAN YOUR SHARE TO SAVE THE WORLD BY JUST SIMPLY TRYING NOT TO BE AN ASSHOLE. I KNOW THE TASK IS DAUNTING; THE NUMBER OF THE ENEMY IS LEGION. BUT TRY IT; IT MIGHT CATCH ON; IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE.

"Where do I go now?"

"TAKE A RUNNING JUMP AND DIVE BACK INTO THE WORLD," said the globe, a diving platform rising from Peruvian Andes, "AND SEE WHERE YOU END UP, AND WHEN YOU LAND, TESTIFY. TELL THIS TALE WHEREVER YOU GO, TO WHOEVER WILL LISTEN," so spoke the spirit of the world to me.

And I dove back into the world, and I landed here, and this is why I have told you this story.



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## Arcwelder - Entropy

Arcwelder is another three-piece from Minneapolis, hometown of Bob Mould. Mould's two former bands, Husker Du and Sugar, essentially drafted the modern rock trio blueprint. Unfortunately, neither Bill Braber nor Scott MacDonald's angst and depression is as compelling as Mould's. So, Arcwelder comes off as a slightly less abrasive, ersatz Husker/Sugar most of the time. The rest of the time, they're just ponderous and pretentious. Yawn. (Touch & Go) df

## Bardo - Amanita

"We're really into textures," the lead guitarist would have us know. "Everybody has like six or seven effects pedals. We just want to fry kids heads." Loosely translated: melody ain't important. "Somebody comes up with a [musical] line and we see how far we can push it. Everybody pretty much does that, piles on top." A pretty fair description of Bardo Pond's strategy which is to take a single melodic phrase and lace it with multiple tracks of distortion-drenched guitars. Underneath, lulling rhythms gradually float to the top as the music grows insidiously louder. Hovering in and out is the fragile, haunted voice of Isobel Sollenberger (or her mournful flute). The most effective compositions are psychedelic, near free-form exercises like "Tantric Porno" and "RM," where volume swells to impossible levels, amniotic waves of fuzzy guitars ebb and flow and the percussion descends to pure atavism before

the diminuendo. Shorter cuts like the spacey, bluesy laced with synthesized whorls and harshly treated vocals. Distorted guitars float in and out, sometimes carrying the melody, sometimes content with adding to the maelstrom. Despite the confrontational quality of cuts like "Compound Pressure" and "No One I Call Friend," the B-movie samples, the incidental music and the calculated outrageousness of much of the lyrics show Bile to have their tongues firmly planted in their cheeks. None of which detract from the dire force majeure of the compositions themselves. (Energy) ds

## bif naked - bif naked

Word to this bif chick. Just 'cause you're a lesbian and a top doesn't make you the bee's knees. Nor does it give you a monopoly on sensitivity. So stick to singing (in that hot sultry ululating voice) about what you, at your present tender age, know best: licking pussy, gazing at pussy and fantasizing about pussy. Trust me, it brings out the best in you: "Succulent" is as funky as funky can be; "My Whole Life" is filled with the kind of frustrated longing Madonna only dreams about getting into a song and "Everything" is the kind of grunge Courtney wishes she could pull out of her Hole. The rest of the stuff is, for the most part, kind of embarrassing; so cut it out and keep your sights set on "the pink teddybear." (Her Royal Majesty Records) ds

## Bile - Teknowhere

Not nearly as revolting as their name suggests, Bile, in fact, makes rather arresting industrial aggro-thrash. *Teknowhere* is the the combo's first full length effort, coming two years after their incendiary, if somewhat histrionic, ep *Suckpump*. Twin bass and primitive drumming fuels an attack

of distorted guitars float in and out, sometimes carrying the melody, sometimes content with adding to the maelstrom. Despite the confrontational quality of cuts like "Compound Pressure" and "No One I Call Friend," the B-movie samples, the incidental music and the calculated outrageousness of much of the lyrics show Bile to have their tongues firmly planted in their cheeks. None of which detract from the dire force majeure of the compositions themselves. (Energy) ds

## Charles Bukowski - Bvk Reads his Poetry

I've been a fan of Bukowski's for many years, ever since I stumbled upon a copy of *Hollywood* in a local B. Dalton bookstore. This is the first time, though, I've ever heard his voice. Turns out Mickey Rourke's version of it in *Barfly* wasn't too far off: Bukowski reads his stuff in an oddly entrancing drawl, stretching out each stressed syllable to the near-breaking point ("a ffffff-ty dolllll-ar horrrrrrse"). The poetry varies in quality (Bukowski's metier was the short story), but the best stuff here - "shot of red eye," "7th race when the angels swung low and burned," "on going out to get the mail," and "fire station" - is very fine indeed. A personal favorite of mine is "fire station": it's the story of Bukowski pimping his girlfriend to a squad of firemen, and it's as sad ad funny and complicated as anything he ever wrote. (Black Sparrow Graphic Arts, Box 22068,

Albuquerque, NM 87154) db

## Cows - Whorn

Cows want to scare, want to menace, want to threaten. But they don't. The quartet can crank out a thick wall of wah-wah drenched noise. But singer Shannon Sieberg, who sounds like a physically weaker, more melodic Henry Rollins, is a sniveling two-bit slacker. His attitude is encapsulated on "Mas No Mas," wherein he whines, "Don't want to waste my time/I just want the world to kneel and slip that diamond ring on my finger." Sorry, shithead, earn it. In the meantime, take that trumpet of yours and plant it somewhere. (AmRep) df

## Shfila Chandra - A Bone Crane Drone

Shall we compare Chandra to the Nico of "Janitor Of Lunacy" or the Velvets on a sultry Manhattan summer day? And how does one compose a poem for the indescribable? We can say, perhaps that Chandra plays things the way they are. On a blue sitar. Or synthesizer. Indian inflected drone with eddying vocals. Ooooh aaaah, aaaah, ooooh. Chirping birds. The cleansing sounds of waves. We wait for rhythm. Sitting quietly in a still place. Listening to things the way they are. (RealWorld) ds

## Cul De Sac - China Gate

China has a bit more of a playerly, jazz-influenced feel than its precursor, ECIM. I would like to state however that this is no more "fusion" than Cans' "Mother Sky," Pink Floyd's "Meddle," Gong, Tortoise or some Savage Republic record I can't remember. But as with the aforementioned, there is a definite wide-eyed knowledge of jazz and various folk/drone psychedelic forebearers. ECIM was more of an eye opener, as the first born must be; but consider how the ingredients - John Faheysque acoustic guitar, purling drum pulsation, haywire outer/inner space noise played in an (early) Roxy Music/Simply Saucer/Hawkwind manner later coopted by the New Age sissies and now utilized by Laika, etc. - flow and waltz beautifully. Oh yeah, somewhere in here I need to mention the Silver Apples. I don't know anything about 'em but they're, like, cool within these parameters, reputedly.

The kicker about both *China Gate* and *ECIM* is that they are so damn fluidly integrated. Nothing ever sounds cobbled together in an ungainly manner - the stitching that is evident is smooth and admirable as all finely crafted products are.

Cul De Sac is the band Pere Ubu might have become had they not been so taken with the art/pop/vocal arrangement nonsense which ultimately destroyed them. Cul De Sac also does not have a singer as large as Ubu's. In fact, they don't have a singer at all; but "some guests" do pop in occasionally to take off their skin and show a little class via larynx when the spirit dictates.

Music like this should be all over public radio. That it lives and breathes, doesn't have victim status or built-in genre-spiel listener support will probably doom it unless an aesthetic revolution takes place. Rarely has such pleasantness provided a springboard for sounds of such high quality. Lend an ear and let the soothing sonorousness share space in the new outdoors hi-tech plastic pastoral exploding inevitable of your mind. (Thirsty Ear) cr

Ronnie Dawson - Just Rockin' & Rollin'  
Ronnie claims to have invented rockabilly. At least that's what he told Conan on his tv show. Conan believed it. I really don't give a fuck. This is tremendous. Dawson didn't write a lot of this shit but he makes it sound like he did. Most times that's better. Elvis is submitted as case in point. Anyhoo, "Veronica," is just about the sweetest unrequited love song I've ever heard. You want to hear someone singing like his heart is about to burst: take a listen to this. Or someone playing like he's shaking his dick in your face; give "It Woudn't Do No Good" a minute of your time, the guitar solo at the outset is so hot it might just melt your disc player. Fact is, I haven't heard something this indulgently epiphanic since Robert Fripp's onanistic pyrotechnics on Eno's "Baby's On Fire." Fact also is, almost every cut has something to recommend it; but it's Ronnie's instru work on the bridges that flat out gits it. Gits it real gone. 'Though Ronnie's weathered, declassé voice helps more than a bit. (Upstart) ds

## Decor Yah - Fall-Dark Waters

Eldritch Gothic intros replete with desanguinated vocals, mournful Baroque melodies and the insistent rhythm of the scythe. Hoffman, Friedrich and Argento. Guitars dying with a dying fall. The stillness of black forests. High-pitched winds plying rotting castles. Bare, ruined sepulchral choirs. Cellos dolefully sawing the air whilst ghostly piano arabesques call to voices drifting on the ether. The music of Death's Dream Kingdom. Somber beauty sucking at the breast of Nepenthe. (Metal Blade) ds

## Delta 72 - The R&B of Membership

A late entrant in the deconstructionist rock blues field - e.g. Mule, Chrome Cranks, Jon Spencer - Delta 72 is certainly the least caustic. It's not for lack of trying though. This half-man half-woman Canadian quartet wails and hammers, it's full throttle attack augmented by Sarah Stoffa's cheesy Farfisa fills and the occasional slurry harmonica blast. While such "membership" applications as "Rich Girls Like To Steal" and "On The Rocks" would have almost any veteran bluesman shaking his moneymaker, the Delta 72's effectiveness is undercut by the earnest but rather unadventurous vocals of Gregg Foreman. With music this tightly constructed, and instrumentalists so adeptly walking the line between roguishness and insanity, the studied pout, the monochromatic yowl, smacks of pretentiousness. Kim Thompson adds a bit of fun when she takes the mike but her exhausted sexuality is utilized far too little and is often buried in the mix. Still, this is a band to watch and supposedly quite the thing live. I don't doubt it; there's loads of talent here. They're just young. (Touch & Go) ds

## Robert Drasnin - Voodoo!

Cut to the chase. Composition number seven is the title piece. Sirenesque moaning in a forties film way i. e. more operatic than sexy. Snakey bass lines, xylophones intercutting, piano vamping, flute whistling high and lonesome, halting bossa nova rhythms, steel drums for flavor. Hardly voodoo. Unless you're a white suburban Sears employee who... Oh, yes of course: Exotica i.e. keep it evocative, weed out the eerie. "Jardin De La Noche" erotica by way of Jackie Gleason. Xylophone as lead. Too weird, give over to piano. No back to phones. "Tambuku?" piano vamping again with chimes interjecting over bongoes. Rather dour for backyard barbecue. Unless you're Martin Denny. Whom Drasnin produced. Enter the soothing sighs of flute. Peace amidst the Tiki jungle. Okay, now we'll start at the beginning. The sweet swoon of sonority. Rum punches poolside as the sun sets in a riot of color. Gentle breezes tugging at the heart strings. Lips brushing in an agony of longing. Delicious, delicious. (Dionysus) ds

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# We're THE fiendz

## The Fiendz-We're The Fiendz

New Jersey's answer to The Shoes, shorn of the desperate noir feel of those Illinois maudits, make music brighter, bigger and bouncier. The breathy winsome vocals and lovely harmonies are placed in the service of disingenuous melodies, artful arrangements, and insidiously infectious tempos - a nod to, and a wink at, superannuated power pop conventions. Did I mention gorgeous? Listen to "Runaway With Me" and "Be My Girl" and get a new take on the word. Then jump in anywhere. The fast numbers jump and bop like vintage Ramones (only sweeter) and the slower ones bewitch and beguile. The Fiendz know what they're about and they know what they're "about" is rather silly but they can't help themselves. And that makes all the difference

## Feedtime-Billy

First off, these boys sure like to play their guitars. All strum und drang. As if they were trying to pull the strings out from the bottom end. Easy to do when you're playing these deep, heavy riffs. That's plural. Wrong choice. 'Cause hardly any of the songs have more than one. Singer ain't too subtle either. Warbles like Lemmy 'fore he's had a chance to gargle after an evening of muff-diving. Here's how it goes: unbelievably monstrous semi-melodious phrases played as loud and hard as humanely possible with drums struck like a blind man warding off the attack of a homosexual rapist. Bass mixed so low as to be absorbed by the aforementioned by caustic bellowing and aforementioned psychotic guitar manipulations. Disdain as epiphany. A fresh approach. One that's endlessly listenable. (AmRep) ds

## Gaunt-Kryptonite

Despite having heard Gaunt described as "second-rate Green Day" I managed to overcome my nausea and listen to this disc anyway. I can see where the Green Day comparisons come from as Gaunt are

mining similar punkish musical territory; but there's a big difference between the two bands: talent and integrity. Especially enjoyable were "Transistor Sister," which had an edge reminiscent of very early Wire, and the slowest song on the CD, "Deranged." While there's some filler here this is a pretty tasty cup of tea for second generation DIYs. (Thrill Jockey) Dayv Benzino

## godhead/Silo-Skyward in triumph

Wait a minute, I've been listening to this for weeks and it's only a bass and drum duo? Alright, the bassist sings, in a manner of speaking, but how do they manage to rock so heavily? And have you believing there be melody here? Must be the dope these guys are smoking. Oh yes they are. How else to explain the six-minute, bowel-emptying, one-note bass solo on "Guardian of the Threshold"? I haven't heard such a bold musical auto-da-fe since *Metal Machine Music*; and like that creepy platter, this disc is, to quote Lester Bangs, so cold it's durable. No, that's a lie; *Skyward* is hot. Hot and energetic. Hot, energetic and inventive. Hot, energetic, inventive, and . . . Mommy take it off! It's too burning! (Sub Pop) ds

## Gone-Best Left Unsaid

*Best Left Unsaid* continues the same instro modus operandi that Ginn has used since *Gree Ginn* revived the band name two years ago: Bassist Steve Sharp and drummer Gregory Moore lay down complex, funk/metal grooves over which Ginn piles layers of screaming guitars. This time around, the more focused and structured jams give Ginn more room to roar. And roar he does - check out "Hotheaded Butchers" and "Closet Courtaholic." Though Ginn often rambles disjointedly, his aggression and daring more than compensate. He could still stand to turn Sharp up a bit higher in the mix, though (SST) df

## The Grifters-Ain't My Lookout

Memphis' Grifters are frequently compared to Guided by Voices because they're thirty-somethings who avoid glossy production and show a healthy respect for the past without being too obvious. The Grifters, however, are noo lo-fi band. The sound of *Ain't My Lookout*, their full-length Sub Pop debut, is far too unmuddled to merit any such label. That is to say, one can hear all the instruments clearly. At the same time, though, The Grifters keep things raw and rough in search of capturing the elusive moment.

They rock like louder, deranged brethren of Big Star, but with a helping of folk-blues worked into the

equation. Their only bit of studio craft is an occasional backwards instrumental passage. *Ain't My Lookout* is proof that good songs don't need much dressing. In a perfect world, "Last Man Alive" and "Radio City Suicide" would receive heavy rotation radio play. Inspired warped song title: "Return to Cinder." (Sub Pop) df

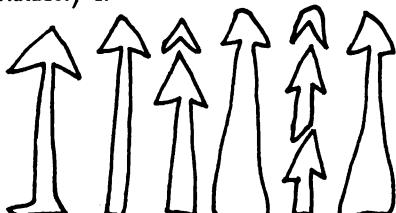
**Guided by Voices-Under the Bushes Under the Stars**  
GbV's third full length major label CD continues the Mersey/British art fixation that GbV leader Robert Pollard has indulged successfully for years. The combo remains the Beatles in a garage on a beer binge, but they're less obviously drunk.

The opening track, "Man Called Aerodynamics," features a startling begining that sounds as if someone dropped the needle into the middle of the record (remember vinyl?). From there, *Under the Bushes* is a dense ride, full of melodic pop gems ("The Official Ironmen Rally Song," "Your Name is Wild," and "Underwater Explosions"), low budget sonic experiments ("The Perfect Life") and precious art/folk "Acorns and Orioles") that takes a few plays to absorb fully. At its best, *Under the Bushes* reaffirms why I listen to rock 'n' roll in the first place. But there are times, as on "Bright Paper Werewolves," when Pollard reveals an odious Greg Lake influence.

Pollard clearly dominates this disc, but guitarist Tobin Sprout contributes four songs. His jangly "Atom Eyes" and "It's Like Soul Man" are among the best here.

Although mostly recorded in studios and composed of songs that average over two minutes in length, *Under the Bushes* is endlessly inventive without being slick. It's much cleaner sounding than its predecessors and is borderline alternative radio friendly. The remade/remodeled version of "Don't Stop Now," which appeared as an acoustic demo on *King Shit and the Golden Boys*, unleashes a potential at which the demo only hinted.

Will success spoil Robert Pollard? Nah! It'll probably just give him enough money to buy better beer. (Matador) df



**The Handsome Family - Milk & Scissors**  
God damn! These drunken hillybilly lunatics can play. Compose too. In that post-modern, mordant, semi-country offhand style - an effortless amalgam of George Jones and Neil Young. Think they're from Chicago too. Got this great singer with this world-weary voice so mournful and worn out it has you thinking suicide. Melodies have you considering the possibility too. Until you take a gander at the lyrics. Real poetic like. "Black holes like Jesus." That's not too god darned a bad metaphor. Nor is "the fish in my stomach wears a full length mink." "The House Carpenter" goes it all one better being a Jesus analogy song. Hell, come to think of it, most of this has me thinking on our Savior. The way I do when I listen to Mozart. Don't understand him much either. (Touch & Go) ds

### Grotus - Mass

"It oughta make you sick the crap we're fed today," lead singer Lars Fox huskily growls on the opening track, but he's certainly not talking about *Mass*. Neither am I because every time I start to write about this aggro-art noise marvel I find myself opening a bottle of Jameson and down I go. You'll find yourself reaching for a bottle of something or other should you happen to bump against this platter: a nasty, greasy twin-base marvel of angst and fractured rhythms. Chock full of funk, blues and hard metallic textures. And some of the most thoughtful, intelligent lyrics I've seen in ages (well, in a while anyway). "A Bad Itch" cleverly limns the mindset of the unwriting (read all white college educated peoples) racist; "Hand To Mouth" gives word to your job dissatisfaction; and "The Bottom Line" lets you know in no uncertain terms that you should kill yourself (who's gonna buy your discs guys?). Not all of the verses betray the influence of Coleridge if you know what I'm saying; but the music kicks major booty, is almost perfectly executed (okay it is, what do I know?) and perhaps most importantly, is a marvelous accompaniment to a whisky and soda. Or a wild nude dance under the stars. (London) ds

### KMFDM - Xtort

I can't see why I should bother reviewing this lp, after all *Rolling Stone* magazine, the only musical source any of us truly need, has already called it "The best industrial album since Nine Inch Nails' the *Downward Spiral*."

The last two KMFDM releases were monotonous

beasts, full of grinding guitars and repetitive lyrics. Their songs were completely interchangeable. They'd been mixing up the same formula for a few years now, and showed no sign of stopping. Imagine my surprise, then, when I discovered that I actually found myself enjoying *Xtort*. No the style hasn't changed at all; but in repeating themselves KMFDM somehow managed to make themselves listenable. Maybe it's the gang of collaborators they've brought in (including F. M. Einheit of Einsturzende Neubauten and William Rieflin from Ministry), maybe it's the more varied tempos, or maybe, practice really does make perfect (or at least better).

While I may not be able to second *Rolling Stone's* hyperbole, this is one of the better industrial efforts of the last few months, and KMFDM's best work in years

(Wax Trax) Dayv Benzino

### The LaDonnas - Shady Lane

Scooch Pooch has a fine track record for such a small company and we'd be the first to sing their praises but it's hard to since label president Julie Ransweiler has had the unmitigated gaul to send us a disc produced by archenemy and rock anti-Christ Conrad Uno. But goddamit, the first cut's nasty outta control rockabilly guitars have me wavering even though that fey, adenoidal voice had me wondering whether he/she is singing about pussy or cock. By the end of this I have little doubt: it's poon. Besides, now that I think of it, tis a bratty english punk mersyeat 70s kind of thang. And lead singer Roscoe LaDonnahue's box probably hasn't changed. Probably never will. At times he even sounds pretty pissed about it. Although the guitars jerking off all over the place will have you forgiving such minor whatevers. As will the slightly-out-of-control, approximately-distorted six-string solos. We're talking garage here. With a 90s sensibility. Know what I mean? Yes you do: dynamics and seemingly mindless nods to idiocy anchoring the proceedings while the center pretends to veer dangerously out of control. Impressive. Most impressive. Conrad, you did good. Now suck my dick you pc fascist! (Scooch Pooch) ds

**Laika & The Cosmonauts - Zero Gravity**  
The good folks at Upstart have seen fit to reissue the incredibly rare early waxings of this seminal Finnish surf band illustrating . . . Wait a minute! There's no surfing in Finland! Snow boarding maybe, but no

surfing . . . Hmm . . . Guess that's why you have the Russian feel on cuts like "C'mon Do The Laika," and "Surf-Ro-Mania" (get it?). Probably also why you have so much weirdness throughout. Which is fine by me because if I hear one more band slavishly aping Dick Dale or the Ventures, I'm gonna kill someone. So where was I? Surfing. Okay, a few of these cuts will have you wishing you were on the shores of Tahiti sipping one of those fruity drinks with paper party favorites stuck in them. Still, most of this is just plain furious guitar twang and reverb seasoned with bold Farfisa accents riding atop drums cracking like the winter waves at Malibu. You've sort of heard it all before - sleazy lounge, cheap spy, kitschy tv - but it's filtered through a twisted sensibility which lends almost every cut (even the covers) a *joie de vivre*, a *je ne sais quoi*; qualities normally missing in American instru retro rock. (Upstart) ds

### Lee Harvey Oswald Band - Blastocraut

Zowie plays guitar

Screwed up eyes

And screwed down hairdo

Like some cat from England

Who has become rather bland

But this is Zowie's glitter punk band

And he's in total command

(Chorus) So where are they goin?

Time has a way of marchin' on

Zowie say's he's into Bolan

If that's true, why not, Get it on?

Is it cause he's livin' in Suffragette City?

Really not a bad place to be

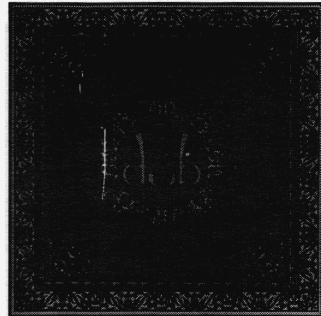
But still I can't help but feel pity

For Zowie, this Ziggy wannabe

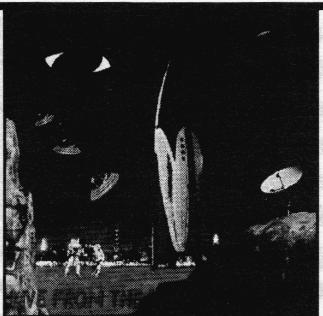
(Touch & Go) ds

### Les Thugs - Strike

Just like the french to not understand a form foreign to them. Or to care. Here we are hailed with a buzzing punk style instru, thrown a little heavyness on the next cut, then allowed to segue into a pop metal thang. It's as if they can't decide whether they want to be the Buzzcocks, Radio Birdman or Motorhead when they grow up. Not that they can sing like Pete Shelley or Lemmy or whatever it is that guy in Birdman calls himself. In fact the Frogs in Les



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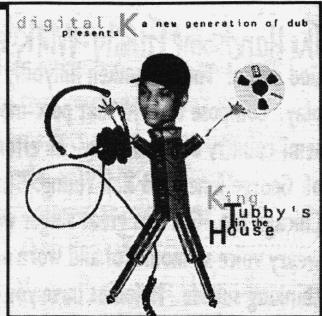


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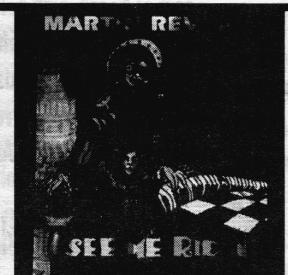
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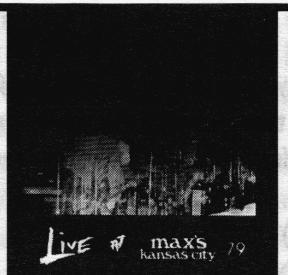
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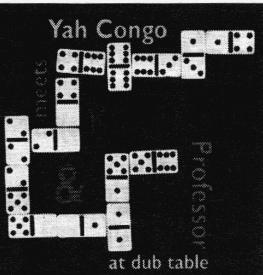


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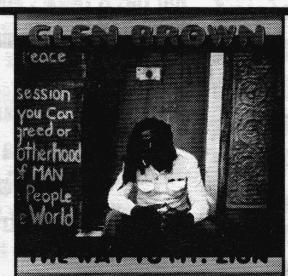
Early '80s Funk/Punk studio  
recordings from barbed wire  
feminists, remastered.



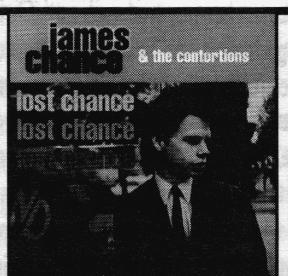
**Yah Congo**  
MEETS KING TUBBY &  
PROFESSOR AT DUB TABLE  
RUSCD 8217  
Mid '70s Dub tracks. First time on CD!



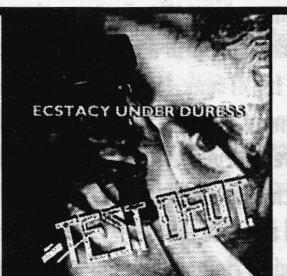
**Alpha & Omega**  
SOUND SYSTEM DUB  
RUSCD 8216  
New Roots Dub system from U.K.  
"Deep deep bass!"



**Glen Brown**  
THE WAY TO MT. ZION  
RUSCD 8215  
'70s crucial vocals/instrumentals Dub  
from Melodica genius!



**James Chance & The Contortions**  
LOST CHANCE  
RUSCD 8214  
Early '80s Funk/Punk/Jazz from  
maestro of NYC's "No Wave."



**Test Department**  
ECSTACY UNDER DURESS  
RUSCD 8213  
1982-83 experimental U.K.  
"Industrial Beat" guerillas.



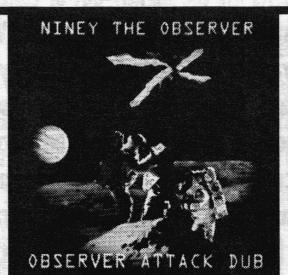
**Crash Worship**  
ASESINOS  
RUSCD 8212  
Tribal, hypnotic Pagan Buzz band,  
'87-'89 recordings, remastered!



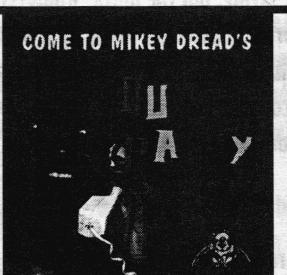
**Laibach**  
1985  
RUSCD 8211  
Industrial icons, first classic European-  
banned LP now on CD.



**Gato Negro**  
VITAL FORCE DUB  
RUSCD 8210  
Deep bass percussive psychedelic  
Dub from the Black Cat himself!



**Niney The Observer**  
OBSERVER ATTACK DUB  
RUSCD 8209  
'70s sparse Dub simplicity, remixed in  
'95. Niney himself "chats."



**Mikey Dread**  
DUB PARTY  
RUSCD 8208  
Mikey's newest! A party record in  
your face dubwise!



**Dub Revolution**  
RUSCD 8207  
11 top producers and sound systems  
from U.K. Zion Train, Disciples, more.

Thugs can't sing a lick. So they push into the red, revel in the feedback and luxuriate in the monochromatic vocal textures. And pray you're too drunk or old to notice the lyrics. C'est de l'essence du rock 'n' roll n'est pas? Et le merde ici est marvelloux! Vraiment, un classique comme Le Stinky Toys. Non, c'est un fou qu'une refuse de recognize Les Thugs et le haute du punque. (Sub Pop) ds

### Los Straitjackets - Viva

With a pedigree like this - Raybeats, Webb Wilder, The Planet Rockers - it's not surprising that this instrumental trio has taken the giant step up from their wildly overrated gremmie debut. Almost any one of these cuts could stand tall with the classic garage sounds of yesteryear. There's the manful Marlboro sound of "Lonely Apache," the twanging Berryisms of "Outta Gear," the swinging rockabilly of "Cavalcade," the boss Venture-like guitar duels of "Venturing Out" and a moody Santo Y Johnny piece to close things out. Some surf stuff too, which is frothy without being frivilous. You can take the masks off now guys and show your faces. You've got nothing to be ashamed of. (Upstart) ds

### Man or Astro-Man? Experiment Zero

Don't let the cover art fool you: there's nothing all that experimental going on here. Space age window dressing notwithstanding, *Experiment Zero* harks back to vibrato-drenched surf records of more than 30 years ago. But M A-M has a more jagged edge and injects a dose of electronics and sound/tape effects into the mix. The group's greatest strength is its Mosrite-stoke intros. The few vocals are buried and seem like an afterthought. Sure, nothing here is destined to take the place of "Misirlou," "Pipeline" or "Wipeout" in your mythology. On the whole, though, *Experiment Zero* rocks like hell, in spite of its occasional sonic gobbledegook. (Touch & Go) df

### Millencolin - Life on a Plate

The thrash of Sweden's Millencolin recalls punk's heyday of 20 years ago, but with a clean, layered sound. Like Rancid, they work in a ska accent or two without being too overt. Like Green Day, they're absorbed in their adolescent dilemmas, but they have the good sense not to take any of that growing-up shit seriously. They tackle such pressing issues as self-doubt ("Bullion"), food ("The Story of My Life"), and the perfect woman ("Killercrush"). Their English-as-a-second-language lyrics are often funny in unintended ways. You've no doubt heard it all before. But they're amusing in a juvenile way. (Epitaph) df

**Modest Mouse - This is a long Drive**  
Heartfelt guitar picking, afterthought drumming, weird wired electric over that and a guy shouting, almost in tune, about dramamine and not being able to focus. Me too. Acoustic grunge: minor key melodies; adenoidal vocals erupting in paranoid shout; shards of guitar shrapnel bursting in mid-air. Landing and burrowing its way into the skin. Rub the irritation and experience vague pleasure. The compositions often naggingly lulls. Veering nearly out of control but managing somehow to pull itself back together. Ascend, hits, sinks and slowly rises back to the surface. We could be talking about these guys years from now in hushed tones. Or we could be laughing hysterically. Flip a coin, two-face. (UP) ds

### Orbital - In Sides

Orbital, an ambient duo from England, has been thrilling critics, electrifying crowds and jamming the dance floors of discos for over five years now. In England. Here, they haven't been nearly as successful. No need to analyse too deeply - you have two or three synth phrases and accompanying time changes per cut with quirky electronic noises and rhythms ebbing and flowing throughout until you're unable to discern which is which. The need, for me at least, is to determine why Orbital hasn't been embraced stateside as Kraftwerk was eventually and Tangerine Dream almost immediately, as their music appears to be heavily influenced by both.. Maybe it's because Orbital's work is, despite the use to which it has been put, neither music for the dance floor nor the headphones. It's earnest background noise. Pushy ambient. There isn't a market for that here. Yet. (Formula) ds

### Poe - Hello

Very late, TV on, sound off, remote cooking, hit a video station. Wow, what a tantalizing top on that singer! Volume up. As a bonus, the "Trigger Happy Jack" song she's singing is damn catchy.

Having bought albums for flimsier reasons than one tune and two breasts, I buy *Hello*, fingers crossed the rest of the material doesn't sound like just another knock-off of a certain phasing phantasmal singer. A spin through Hightlight-Scan demonstrates this is definitely not Whip-smarter - in all the best possible ways.

It's unfortunate the term "alternative" has become virtually meaningless, because this is an album that truly deserves the description. Poe's material defies

the convenient classifications, as through the course of eleven cuts there are songs that would sound quite natural on a half-dozen differently formatted radio stations.

That's not to suggest Poe is the younger sister of Kim Wilde, debuting with a collection of musically unrelated tracks in search of a chart. First off, Poe and cohorts deliver with conviction, an element missing among the mercenaries. Secondly, the material is too quirky to be a calculated express to Hitville.

With polyrhythms and quick-but-smooth dynamic shifts throughout, the crew on the dance floor will be doing a lot of head-scratching. Which is good because *Hello* warrants attentive listening.

During any random five minutes one is apt to hear a distorted guitar line on top of a funky drum beat, sci-fi synth beeps here, a noirish muted trumpet there. Lyrically, the feel is more Lou than Donna Reed; vocal phrasing often enters jazz territory. The result is a refreshingly unpredictable pastiche with a raw enough edge to ensure confidence Poe won't be turning into Sade by her third album.

(Give the lady "extra credit" for being the songstress to write "/ want to kill you/I want to blow you... [two-beat pause] ... away.")

Brut bottom line: *Hello* would rate repeated play even if Poe were a B-cup.

(Don't Know ) stately wayne manor

### Scud Mountain Boys - Massachusetts

God, it's almost the end of the century and there are people out there who still worship The Eagles. Will someone please tell me what the appeal is in lightweight melodies riddled with clichéd lyrics and ponderous themes? Is it the world-weary, stoned-come-hither singing? The crescendo drenched arrangements? The soothing textures? Beats me, some questions just do not admit answers. I'll get to the aforementioned conundrums as soon as I stop wrestling with the reason for Dan Fogelberg's existence. (Some Poop) ds

### Brian Setzer Orchestra - Guitar Slinger

There's no question the guy can sling the guitar; the pyrotechnics alone on this disc are almost worth the price of admission. Almost. You see this impeccably produced and arranged work of Setzer's "rockin' Big Band" (five saxes, four trumpets, four trombones, piano bass and drums) is, for the most part, a

miserable attempt at mixing the disparate musical forms of swing and rock. And as everyone know, this you cannot do. Swing is Apollonian, civility with the hair a bit mussed. Rock is Dionysian, frenzied, primordial. No common ground between the two you see. Now you can take the music of Glenn Miller and turn everything up several notches a la Jim Thirwell but you have to stay within the parameters, observe the niceties. Nor do you throw in a rockabilly solo in the middle of a Louis Jordan styled jump-blues. Spoils the effect. And even when Brian plays it relatively straight on cuts like "Town Without Pity," or the Count Basie knockoff "Man With The Magic Touch" his colorless singing only serves to underscore the emotional vapidly at the heart of this ill-advised project. (Interscope) ds

**Sixteen Horsepower-Sackcloth & Ashes**  
16 HP choose to play out the rape scene from *Deliverance* (d. John Boorman 1972) without the humanity and a sense of damaged self-importance. By combining high-minded, low-brow camp with Appalachian gothic, the resultant mix is a stylistic exercise maybe not as mean-spirited as Frank Zappa's ridicule of the country genre but just as vacuous.

Nick Cave has mined a similar vein with his Elvis-as-Faulkner imagery shtick but his stylistic excesses were offset by a gothic aesthetic refracted through simian-australian-junkie-Berliner aesthetic and he brought a certain empathy to his überwauulings. Or at least it seemed that way. Perhaps this is due to the fact that very little of Cave's work resembles a reality any more believable than that of Ed "Big Daddy" Roth.

But I digress, on *Sackcloth*, the Jed Clampett-in-Valhalla vibe dramatically renders un-dramatic tales of man's further inhumanity to woman, the bottle, and the Bible  
If this were the Old Testament, God would look down, laugh, sternly point to Herb Alpert, and turn 16 Horsepower into pillars of salt. (A&M) jon stickley

**Stapled Shut - LA TIMES**  
Either the end of hardcore or a new beginning. Ultra fuzzy sound, murky riffing and simple time signatures. Often quite allegro. In obeisance to pure contempt. Played with mucho gusto. AND WITHOUT LYRICS! Just guttural screams and onomatopoeic grunts. A few soundbites added before each cut to

alert you to the fact that this is a 100% pure all-beef American band. Quite arousing in its refusal to acknowledge the insanity at the heart of it all. (Box 4005, West Covina, CA 91791) ds

**Supercharger- Goes Way Out**  
Jesus, these guys can barely play. Or keep time. And the lead singer certainly can't sing. Neither can the bird who guests on two cuts. The drummer sounds like (s)he's banging on garbage cans. In fact, the whole thing *sounds* like it was recorded in my garage. And I've got a shitty garage. Probably the reason the fourteen cuts clock in at twenty-six minutes and change. Ineptitude goes a long way in a short time. Toward establishing genius. I'll give it a 98. (Estrus) ds

**Test Department-Estasy Under Duress**  
Kicking around since '82, Test Department produced unobtrusive reggae-folk-pop . . . wait that's 10,000 Maniacs. Next entry in my *Trouser Press Record Guide*. Terry, Blair And Anouchka . . . Here it is: Test Dept. . . . "Eschewing all musical tradition . . ." Haven't these guys ever listened to Hindemith? Or John Cage? Not Test Dept. *Trouser Press* I mean. Obviously not. Test Dept has and determined that in the rock demimonde you can steal from these guys but you've got to keep things moving. Maybe not. Anyway, if you can imagine Neubauten with structure you've got these Brits down cold. Lots of banging on things. Pipes, trash cans, etc. The sound of the factory pounding in the brain of the ambulatory schizophrenic. Primitive. Catchy. The rhythms that is. Then they shout over it. Bleating horns, cellos and harps make sudden, startling appearances. A little touch of humanity in the gray, hopeless soundscape. (ROIR) ds

**Johnny Thunders - Have Faith**  
For those of you who, having seen Thunders live, and were subsequently left wondering about his godhead status, here's the evidence: twelve smoking cuts recorded live in Japan in '88. Even the slow numbers like "Can't Put Your Arm Around A Memory" burn with an intensity all but missing from the studio work. And old chestnuts like "Personality Crisis" and "Chinese Rocks" have just the right mix of sloppiness and professionalism. Unbelievable, the Japs must have done a full body search of all band members after they deboarded. (Mutiny) ds

**Total Chaos-Anthems From The Alleyway**  
Pure punk. Anthemic and incendiary. With English accents. Drums like a sock to the gut. Guitars as a call to arms. Solos a stinging chastisement. I can

hear the press now: breaks no new ground; we've heard it before; give us something new. Fuck that! '77 was a great year. A fine wine is a fine wine. And great rock is great rock. Everything that went down in the few months when England seemed to have the world at its feet has been distilled into two and a half to three minute bursts of sublime melodic three-chord fury. Without apologies or acknowledgments to anyone. Don't blame them. They're that good. (Epitaph) ds

**Pete Townshend-The Best of Pete**  
Watching a hero who's past his prime can be sad, particularly when that hero has neither the good sense to retire nor the misfortune to die before he gets old. Such is the case with Pete Townshend. Instead of exiting gracefully, he'd rather find yet another way to flog *Tommy*.

The original Who were two of my first concerts. The Townshend who I remember from those shows remains the most charismatic rock performer I've seen. Just to try to imitate the spastic and peripatetic leaps, slides, and scissor kicks, to say nothing of the windmills and power chords, was reason enough to pick up the guitar. Add to the mix his songs, which fully articulated the concerns of an awkward, neurotic adolescent, and this suburban nut job had an icon. But it has een more than 20 years since the last consistently enjoyable Who album - *The Who by Numbers* - and over 10 since Townsends' last fully realized solo project - *White City*.

**Best Of**, a single-disc anthology of Townshend's solo records, should keep Townshend's name in the public eye until his next hookless, ponderous production. Predictably, it largely avoids *Iron Man* and *Psycho Derelict*, his last two bombs, and draws largely from his song-based work from the early-to-mid 1980's.

Compilers Jon Astley and Andy MacPherson included two tracks each from *Who Came First* and *Rough Mix* (with Ronnie Lane), Townshend's two non-Who projects from the 1970's. But they ignored *Scoop* and *Another Scoop*, his intriguing collections of demos, in favor of "Uneasy Street," a *Psycho Derelict* outtake (the lp wasn't bad enough?), and a needless re-recording of "Let My Love Open the Door," Townshend's one top 40 hit. Moreover, despite buffed-up CD mastering, the track selection is haphazard, and the sequencing careens between time periods with no apparent sense of purpose.

Damn that Walker kid! Once upon a time, Townshend wrote perfect singles and thoughtful album tracks. Then Tommy warped his priorities. Townshend's anthology gives the impression that he thinks it's beneath him to write a three-minute pop song and that his music must be tied into some thunderingly serious theme. None of his post-*Tommy* conceptual works have been fully realized either. Townshend would do well to scrap the dramatic twaddle and get back to songwriting, part of what made him interesting in the first place. (Atlantic) df

## Trance-Augury

The fourth disc by the mysterious Trance finds him assaying an eerie somnambulistic territory best described as eerie somnam . . . er, "dark ambient." Or in other words, vaguely disquieting soundscapes inspired by twilight, crumbling mausoleums, and Lovecraft. Tone poems deftly constructed of purling sepulchral synthesized melodies, apotropaic electronic sounds and vague, haunting rhythms. In lesser hands this might have descended into Gothic bombast but in the atrophied digits of He Who Is Always Cloaked, *Augury* is sublime. Beauty dying with a dying fall. (Charnel House) ds

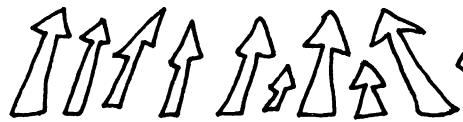
## Vampyros Lesbos-Sexadelic Dance

The music from three "amazing" films by prolific Spanish director Jess Franco. Yes, the flicks - *Vampyros Lesbos*, *Mrs Hyde*, and *The Devil Came From Akasava* - are amazing. Amazingly bad. As is this "sexadelic dance party" soundtrack. Although, unlike the aforementioned Franco flicks, these Eurotrash compositions are pure kitsch. And thus hilarious. They want to swing, to move, but they fall all over themselves trying to sell. A sitar does battle with brassy horns while a tuba provides counterpoint. A somber theme introduced by piano is undercut by a tastelessly maudlin chorus while a drummer high hats it for all he's worth. On the aptly titled "There's No Satisfaction," funky keyboard work does the strut unperturbed that the ever present nasal-toned sitar has confused diarrhea with hot pants and the epicene, wordless singers, not to mention the kazoo players, are stumbling all over themselves attempting to get on the good foot. Instructions for listening: three very dry martinis, volume turned to distortion level, priapism. (Motel Records, 210 E. 49th St., NY, NY 10017) ds



## Various-Estrus Cocktail Companion

Compilations like this are a kind of metaphor for our lack of readers. We give an honest, amusing, cerebral description of the work in question and what happens? We're derided for not providing arcane information. Which we can, of course, but it's just, well, boring. As in this case. Hell, I know, Dave Crider, the genius behind Estrus, personally. And through him I can tell you all you want to know about the bands on this thing: the original release dates of the singles contained herein, the recording number, the sales figures, etc. What's the point? What are you going to do with such useless information? It won't help you win on *Jeopardy*. Or at *Trivia Pursuit* parties. Your bowling team could care less (memorize the *Baseball Encyclopedia* if you want to score points there). So buy this for the fabulous garage stroll of the Del Lagunas, the avant-blues insanity of Jack O' Fire, the cheeky rockabilly of Southern Culture On The Skids and the nine other thrilling bits of moderne-styled retro business . . . Alright here: these cuts were originally released as six double sided singles in a box set with coasters and swizzlers bearing the Estrus logo. Happy? (Estrus) ds



## VariouS-Punk You, Vol. 1

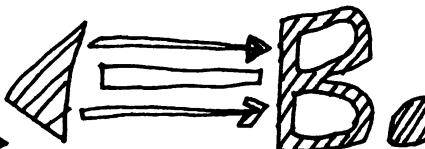
The 17-band lineup for this compilation reads like a *New Musical Express* club ad spread from the late Seventies, before punk was listed on the stock exchange. Stranglers, X-ray Spex, Buzzcocks, Gen-X, Damned, 999, Wire, Adam & The Ants and nine others of similar infamy are brought together for one more hoorah . . . on the EMI label. Now that's ironic, Anus Morrisette..

I could feel a nostalgic tear form in my right eye while listening to this collection with the appalling subtitle "Music For The Discerning Slacker Punk." (The what?) Bow Wow Wow. Ooh, that Anabelle sure personified the musical Lolita. Tom Robinson. "2-4-6-8 Motorway" with its singalong chorus was huge in Britain. Then the poor sap managed to lose his entire following by v-e-r-y incorrectly assessing his audience would embrace his "Glad To Be Gay" single. Yikes, there's a Siouxsie song I actually like! And that Killing Joke cut seems to be an, um, "inspiration" for "Come As You Are."

The tear in my left eye, however, is due to the disc's overall mix. Gone is the wall of noise prevalent with DIY bands. The transfer to digital and the medium's tendency to create separation may be partly to blame. But I suspect equal culpability goes to comp producer Vincent Vero. There's too much consistency of sound between divergent acts, suggesting a master mix overrode that of the original producers.

The rhythm section took the worst hit: once-dominant bass lines are moved to the back of the bus and drums are far too mushy. On a more positive note, the digital clarity lends a further appreciation to the power of Spex chub Poly Styrene's pipes as she belts out "Oh Bondage (Up Yours)." So it's not all unfavorable.

By no means does the above imply the mix "ruins," the album - because it certainly doesn't. Hearing *Punk You* is like spending about an hour listening to some of the hottest singles on Max's Kansas City's killer jukebox circa '78. But you may enjoy it more if you flip on the equalizer before hitting the "play CD" button. (EMI) Stately Wayne Manor





# OZZY'S SIX-PACK THEATRE

You know, guys often write in complaining about how inept their immorantas are at giving the ole hummer. They wonder. Oh, how they wonder. And they ask. They ask: Ozzy, is a decent blow-job a reality in this sad, silly, politically-correct world? Well, in a word: Yes! Still, I can't talk about technique. For one thing, I'm not a woman. Nor am I gay. So I've never had a dick in my mouth. Or my ass. I'm not putting it down, mind you. Live and let live I say. It's just that I'm the wrong person to ask about fellatio. Cunnilingus? That's a different story; although I'm not about to share my secrets with anyone. I'm not bad looking; but I'm not exactly Richard Gere either and if I give away my hard earned, patented technique I'd probably never get a second date. However, I can tell you Ozzy fans what you can, and should do, to make the oral experience a wee bit more enjoyable.

First of all, you should warn your little love muffins that under no circumstances are they to spit your semen after you drop your load. There's nothing as emasculating as

knowing you're going to have to pull out just as you're about to come. It is, pardon the pun, anti-climactic. Puts way too much pressure on you. You're supposed to be letting yourself go. Forgetting everything but the pleasure of the moment. Which is damn near impossible if it's understood that you're going to be watching her coughing up your manly fluids on the bedspread in the not so distant future.

Besides, you don't vomit-up the hairs and piss and viscous fluids she emits when you go down on her do you? Nor do you think twice about eating her when she's on her period. In fact, there have been times you've wanted her so badly you were ready to pull her tampax out with your teeth. Don't deny it. You know you have. Moreover, she knows you have. So don't let her continue with this charade about not liking the taste, or it being an act of male dominance or your coming too much.

Secondly, don't let her complain about you not having washed

enough. How many times have you put your mouth to the font of Venus even when she intimated it was akin to Bhopal down there. You didn't care did you? You just wanted to bury your face in her pussy and . . . drift. There's nothing like blotting out reality with cooze. Especially for a pathetic, helpless loser like yourself.

Bhopal brings to Ozzy's diseased mind a tangential but important bit of business: women's almost a priori belief in the fulsomness of their vaginal odors; their unswerving conviction their holy of holies is a foul repository of muck and mire. No matter what unguements they employ to freshen it. The delicious irony here: men don't give a shit one way or another. If we're attracted to a jape, we'll spend hours licking pussy. Would you refrain from diving into Kim Bassinger after she'd just gotten off the john? Of course not. You'd lick her hot spot until the dawn's early light.

Alright, enough beating about the bush. Point three: If you have a

nicely shaped cock, cut your pubes to show it off. Gals have a highly developed aesthetic sense.

They're like the Japanese that way. If you set the table they're going to want to eat. Until they burst. Don't doubt this for a second. If they have to go hunting through a forest of greasy tangles to find the prize; however, they're not going to want to put their mouth on it. Their hand maybe; but not their mouth.

Fourthly, wash your ass. No, make that scrub your ass. With a brick if need be. Women are much more sensitive to odors than men. You may think you've done the job with a few swipes of the washcloth but believe me, it's never enough. Unless you're bald back there in which case you're probably getting boned by guys and have long since stopped reading by now. I remember one time going out with this real finicky gal. I spent all day cleaning my crack. Even gave myself an enema. Used a blow torch to destroy any and all recalcitrant dingleberries. It still wasn't enough. On close inspection she . . . well, never mind; let's just say I spent the rest of the evening alone in my leather lazy-boy pretending I was an Air Force pilot. You just can't be too clean.

Number five: eat healthily. Your spunk actually tastes better on a macrobiotic diet than on one fueled by pizza and beer. How do I know? I don't; but this is what I've been told by holistic gals and guys. So why not give it a shot if you're having trouble. Once your mate gets in the habit you can always go back to over-indulging in fried foods and red meats.

Remember though, it takes at least twenty days before something becomes routine. Right? Ever tried going twenty days without alcohol? Okay, we're on the same page. You're going to have to make a manly effort.

Sixto: wear sexy underwear. Don't come on to her with tobacco stained fruit of the looms. If she likes boxers (shudder) invest in a couple of silk pairs, try not to leak into them too much during the day, and suck in your stomach when coming in for a landing. Then try not to laugh too loudly as she proceeds to rip your shorts off with her teeth.

Of course there's no substitute for looking good and dressing like a million dollars and even then you have to indulge a gals' fantasy despite your haute couture inclinations. And some birds, no matter how much you've spent on threads, want a thinner version of Charlie Daniels. Don't worry about it. So what if they're trash? Put on the jeans, leather vest and cowboy boots, and try to conceal your contempt. It's worth it; she'll eat you like a condemned man on his last meal. Probably let you indulge in your wildest fantasy to boot. Without ever mentioning the cops . . . Read on, what follows is important:

## D'aboli que - d. Jeremiah Chéchile

Yet another pointless remake of a classic film. No, pointless is the wrong word. I don't want any of you out there thinking this stinker possesses even a scintilla of the mordant wit and fierce intelligence of the Henri-Georges Clouzot

original. Because this flick doesn't. Nor is it the least bit suspenseful. In fact, after the opening scene in which we get to peep on the luscious Isabelle Adjani doffing her clothes in preparation for a bath, it's almost unwatchable. Not to mention completely unbelievable. As in we're supposed to buy that Adjani and Sharon Stone are teachers at an exclusive private school for boys (you ever met anybody in higher education who looked like Stone or Adjani?). And that both of them are hot for the frog faced Chaz Palminteri. And that the aforementioned Palminteri can run the school, play all sorts of mind games with wife Adjani, carry on an affair with Stone, and while he's not boffing both Stone and Adjani, devise and effectuate an elaborate deception with Stone, the purpose of which is to induce a heart attack in Adjani. Yes, the original was just as ridiculous but it had panache. It had atmosphere. It had actors underplaying like they were sleepwalking in their own nightmare. This, this . . . thing, has little style, less substance and a director who obviously didn't have the courage to tell his high-priced stars to play it cool. And as we all know, cool is the only way to approach the ridiculous. Unless you're Cathy Bates laboring under the delusion you've bagged the William Conrad role in the big screen version of *Jake and The Fatman*.

## Primal Fear d. Gregory Hoblit

Paramount Pictures is literally begging critics not to divulge the "special twist" in this courtroom thriller but anyone who's seen

either *Anatomy Of A Murder* or *Witness For The Prosecution* is going to figure things out long before the "shocking" denouement. Still, this Richard Gere vehicle is fairly engrossing and features fine performances by Gere and a stellar cast of character actors. Laura Linney who seemed lost in *Congo* is particularly good as Gere's former lover and legal opponent in a seemingly open and shut murder case. The accused is a nineteen year old altar boy caught running from the site of a gruesome butchering of a powerful Chicago Archbishop. Although covered in the Archbishop's blood, the young man, apparently possesses little motive for the crime, having been taken off the streets and literally adopted by the kindly cleric.

Gere, a charming but opportunistic high-profile defense attorney jumps at the chance to take the case, believing this is the out that will allow him to win an acquittal. The problem however, is that neither he, nor the police, can place anyone else at the scene of the crime. So it's up to Gere to find the killer. And he does but he has to go a long way and in the end he winds up where he started from. That's the real twist at the heart of *Primal Fear*.

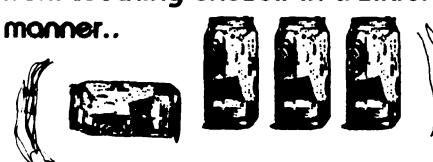
Unfortunately, it's all downhill from there; the screenwriters knowing they have nowhere to go set up one silly contrivance after the other in an effort to delay a resolution that even a cretin like Ozzy could see coming from a mile away. Make that two miles.

Nevertheless, everyone acts their ass off, clearly relishing the juicy lines they've been given, and for this one can forgive almost everything. Almost. →

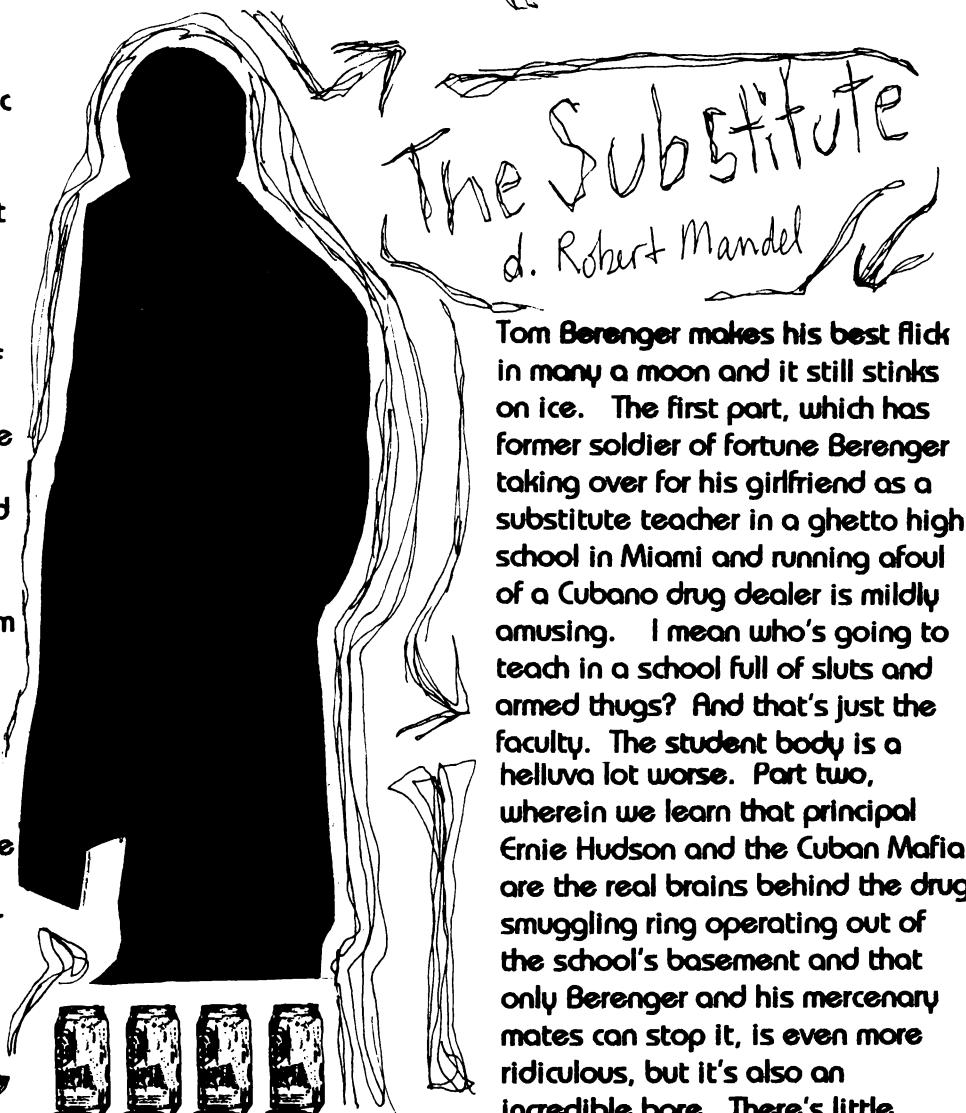
## [ *Fear* — d. James Foley ]

So let me get this straight: it's a crime to traffic in child pornography; it's immoral to even think about sex with the underage; yet it's perfectly acceptable to make a big budget Hollywood feature showing off the tits and ass of a sixteen year old girl (Reese Witherspoon). Well make that two underage girls. I forgot about Alyssa Milano. Alright, so both the actress playing the teenager smitten with psycho Marky Mark and Alyssa are supposed to be s-i-x-t-e-e-n. There's the rub. Why are they high

school juniors? Why can't they be college juniors? Because then seeing Alyssa get her titties twisted and Reese getting finger-fucked on a roller-coaster wouldn't be nearly as interesting. William Petersen is rather effective in the thankless role of the uptight put-upon daddy, and former underwear spokesperson Marky has his moments, but the story is so formulaic, the plot twists so predictable, the mise en scene so determinidly freudian, its almost impossible to watch this nonsense with a straight face. Or to refrain from touching oneself in a sinful manner..



## The Substitute d. Robert Mandel



Tom Berenger makes his best flick in many a moon and it still stinks on ice. The first part, which has former soldier of fortune Berenger taking over for his girlfriend as a substitute teacher in a ghetto high school in Miami and running afoul of a Cubano drug dealer is mildly amusing. I mean who's going to teach in a school full of sluts and armed thugs? And that's just the faculty. The student body is a helluva lot worse. Part two, wherein we learn that principal Ernie Hudson and the Cuban Mafia are the real brains behind the drug smuggling ring operating out of the school's basement and that only Berenger and his mercenary mates can stop it, is even more ridiculous, but it's also an incredible bore. There's little

action and far too much bonding. Between Berenger and his girlfriend. Berenger and the students. Berenger and his buddies. Berenger and Berenger. Berenger and his faithful dog . . . oops, wrong movie. But you get the picture. This is a film devoid of intelligence and charm - not always such a bad thing - and humor; the latter though, a necessity with a script as puerile as this one.

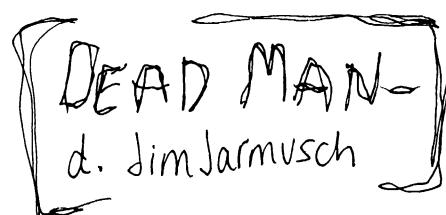
something about film just by osmosis but the simple fact of the matter is that Jean-Claude hasn't a clue how to tell a story or set a scene. Even the climactic battle with a sanguinary over-developed Mongol is hopelessly contrived and uninvolving. Well, not totally uninvolving, Oz was so annoyed with Jean-Claude at this juncture he found himself actively rooting (as was the sparse crowd in the theatre) for the Hun.

freedom-fighting brother. When the money gets tight - her brother is always tight living as he does on a strict liquid diet - our heroine does a little moonlighting as a bounty hunter. (Did I mention this film was based on a comic book?) The reappearance of an old flame toting the lovely international leader of the underground resistance interrupts this bucolic existance. Hard on the duo's heels are the fascist forces who control the East Coast. When they enter the scene all hell is supposed to break loose. It might have. Oz missed the last twenty minutes of this audacity having become so bored by the first seventy he found himself retreating to the bathroom with the latest copy of *Playboy*. The one with Pamela on the cover.



If you think Jean-Claude emoting is a pitiful sight, wait till you see him try to direct this disaster, the umpteenth remake of *Blood Sport*. Yes, it's the Muscle from Brussels again laboring under heavy odds in an effort to win a Kuomintang (a no-holds-barred fight tournament). Frankly, Ozzy loves remakes of *Blood Sport* but Jean-Claude is apparently under the delusion that what he is refashioning here is *Once Upon A Time In New York*. Sepia tones, langorous-Morricone styled musique, a stately pace, even an opening set in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge with our aspiring auteur as the elder leader of a gang of street urchins! In an attempt to pad out the flick's running time we're given a ridiculous sub plot involving Roger Moore as an elderly buccaneer and his attempts to steal the golden dragon awarded to the winner of the martial contest. And a sort of sub-plot one with James Remar that's far too risible to even begin to explain. You'd think after making so many movies Van Damme would have learned

There are only two reasons anybody in his right mind would want to go see a Pamela Anderson's first starring turn in a feature-length flick: her tits. There, Oz has said it. Gotten it off his chest so to speak. And speaking of chests, you don't really see much of Ms. Anderson's in *Barb Wire*. Uncovered that is. Oh, it's cinched tight; but really, who aside from a few recalcitrant Mormons, is going to care? Listen, Mr. Hogan, we came to see Pammy's naked hooters so what the hell are you doing getting coy with the soapsuds and the watersprays and the dressing screens? Especially when you don't have a story to tell, little violence and apparently no idea how to edit an action sequence. Our tale (not Pamela's, we don't get to see that amazing monument to statepygia either) finds Anderson or *Barb Wire* running an industrial dance bar in the only neutral city in a United States torn by civil war in the year 2017. *Barb* too is neutral; she cares little for anything save money and her blind, former



Normally, Ozzy leaves Jarmusch for the caviar and Stoli crowd but inasmuch as this hot redhead had a free ticket, Mr. Fide had little choice but to attend the DC premiere of this surreal revisionist Western. And surprise, surprise, surprise, despite its glacial pace and arty pretensions, Oz found the whole shebang to be purty damn entertaining and even purtier to look at. Director Jarmusch has been able to coax his cinematographer into achievng that silver tone grandeur you see in the work of Ansel Adams and invested his mise en scene with a serene and sometimes disquieting otherworldiness. The story ain't much - turn of the century accountant Johnny Depp on the run in the wilderness for murders of

which he is innocent - but it's peopled by weird characters played by wonderful character actors (Robert Mitchum, John Hurt, Lance Henriksen, Crispin Glover) and its so relentlessly devoid of meaning that almost every sound, every gesture, takes on a cosmic significance. Right, it's the perfect movie to see stoned; but even if you're not, Jarmusch throws in some atrocity like a throat slitting or a bit of cannibalism, to keep you from wishing you were.



might remember from the cult television show, a marvelous slam-bang bit of business with a helicopter and a speeding train in a tunnel during the final reel, and amusing supporting performances from Jon Voight, Jean Reno (*The Professional*) and Ving Rhames (Jackson and Travolta's boss in *Pulp Fiction*); but Robert "China" Townes and David Koepp's script is embarrassingly jejune and hopelessly contrived. De Palma directs on automatic pilot and our headliner, suave and soigne as always, is on Cruise control throughout.

"Superfly" O'Neal, Jim Brown and Pam Grier and then told he can't write the script. The result is a boring mess bearing little resemblance to the classic blaxploitation films of the seventies. And come to think of it, the not-so-classic blaxploitation films of the seventies. Word up: I was standing on line at the multiplex the night this abomination opened and the brothers and sisters were plunking down their hard earned cash for *Twister*. What does that tell you? Yeah, das right, dis flick be whacked.

## "A REAL SUMMER FIRECRACKER. IF YOU'RE HOT FOR SUSPENSE, 'MISSION: 'IMPOSSIBLE' WILL LIGHT YOUR FUSE!"

PHOTO BY RAYMOND WILSON

SHOW ORIENT MISSION IMPOSSIBLE  
SHOW ORIENT MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

d. Brian de Palma

A high-tech thriller sans thrills and rather low-tech despite the millions obviously spent on it, *Mission Impossible* puts Tom Cruise at the center of a needlessly complex story of CIA turncoats and their efforts to sell the identities of The Agency's undercover operatives to a shadowy European group led by a badly aging Vanessa Redgrave (Don't they have toothpaste over in Europe?). There is a terrific sequence involving a break-in at Langley which tops anything you



(Original  
Gangsters-  
d. Larry Cohen

They shoulda kept that old gang of mine broken up. Director Larry (*Black Caesar, Hell Up In Harlem*) Cohen is allowed to team Fred "The Hammer" Williamson, Ron

The Arrival  
d. David Twohy

It's up to radio astronomer Charlie Sheen to save the human race from bug eyed, grasshopper legged aliens but he can't get anyone to believe him. Not about the extraterrestrials. About his being a radio astronomer. A cable installer or Circuit City salesman maybe; but not an astro-physicist. If you're extremely willing to suspend disbelief; however, you're likely to find yourself seriously involved with Charlie's efforts to discover and then warn the world of an insidious scheme designed to melt the polar icecaps. How? Get this. By using power plants to accelerate the global warming process. Jesus, if the disjointed monsters were willing to wait about fifty years they could've saved themselves loads of time and trouble. Fortunately for the viewers, the bad guys are impatient little critters, so we get treated to some nifty special effects, an amazing sequence

inside one of the power plants, a number of thrills and chills, and all manner of little plot twists. Plus Lindsey Crouse almost getting naked before being done-in in a scene that would've done Hitchcock proud. An old-fashioned serial disguised as a big-budget Hollywood spectacular.



## The Phantom - d. Simon Wincer

Billy Zane stars in a movie no one wanted based on a comic no one ever read. Bill looks real pretty though, what with his wavy black hair and insouciant musculature. There are some pretty girls in this one too but unlike, Zane, they keep their clothes on. Better they had taken them off because with the lines these women have been given you'd hardly notice them. The story - The Phantom running all over the place, mostly in 1939 Manhattan, to keep Treat Williams from acquiring three skulls which will make him master of time, space and reality - is also unworthy of attention. Still, the flick moves at a decent pace, there's a helluva lot of effectively staged action sequences and nobody even remotely directed with this folderol takes any of it seriously. A prediction: Zane, thanks to his hot purple spandex skull outfit, sultry posing, and continually pursing of his rubescent lips, eventually becomes an icon in the homosexual community.



## The Rock - d. Michael Bay

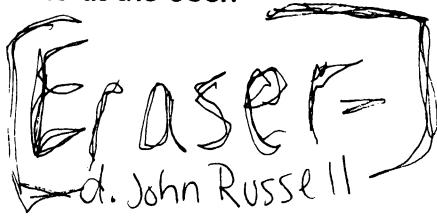
A Simpson and Bruckheimer film. Do you need to know any more? *Batman*, Tom Cruise, Eddie Murphy, *Flashdance*, *Days of Thunder*: the mind reals, the lower intestine gives way. Psycho marines attempting to bomb San Francisco with deadly nerve gas and only Sean Connery and Nicholas Cage standing in their way! Guys! Guys! It's not that hard to make an action potboiler. Alright, it was a good start getting character actors like William Forsythe, John McGinley, Tony Todd and Ed Harris to play cardboard cutouts. But why the pointless violent set-pieces? You can't have Sean Connery destroying hove of San Fran in a car chase merely to show the audience he's a terrific wheel man. Fleshing out male protagonists through interaction with the female is equally silly, if it has nothing to do with the story, if it's merely a contrivance designed to gain our sympathy. You ever see *Assault On Precinct 13*? Great film. One of the reasons: the play between male and female was necessary. We learned, gained insight into character and yet were allowed to retain misgivings. The inherent mistrust of the male for the female in crisis situations, in a setting that called for fast action, was part and parcel of the scenario. Simple, yes. Obvious, yes, but also extremely effective. Also effective whenever you have an assault on a seemingly impregnable fortress - here San Quentin - is to establish

parameters; we want to understand the strategy, what has to be hit, what has to be done to succeed. You don't just dump your protagonists in the middle of nowhere and have them run around like rats in a maze. Sure, it gives you the freedom to do whatever you want; at the cost of intrigue and coherence. Hitchcock understood this and that is why we still watch in rapt fascination even his most contrived entertainments.

## Twister - d. Jan De Bont

Here in the Kingdom of Barry, otherwise known as the District of Columbia, we have this amazing theatre in the Air and Space Museum. It's the first thing you should hit after the National Gallery of Art. Screen about six stories tall. Incredible surround sound. The ne plus ultra of cinema. They don't show feature films. They show nature documentaries. People swimming around in coral reefs, outer space footage, guys picking dust out of their ass in the Kalahari and shit like that. *Twister* would be the perfect flick to watch in this setting. Because it's all special effects. And they are, not to put to fine a point on it, absolutely incredible. Director De Bont, the auteur behind *Speed*, apparently understood the reason d'être for this Michael Crichton penned flick early on, and thus sagaciously jettisoned whatever story there was, leaving little more than a dizzying series of thrill rides aboard twisters of varying intensities. Which is fine with

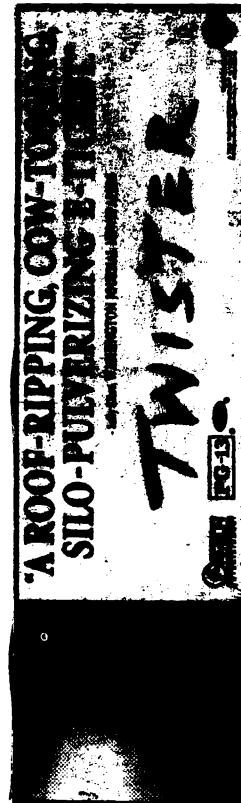
Ozzy, as he could care less about Bill Paxton's attempts to win back his cyclone-chasing estranged wife (Helen Hunt) while juggling a relationship with his fiance. Or Paxton's attempts to outwit high tech corporate financed rivals who are seeking to undermine Hunt's weather research. Or the comraderie between Paxton and his former crew. All of which will translate quite badly to video, so see *Twister* now on the biggest screen you can find and check your mind at the door.



Ah-nuld is back and while Oz can't say this high-tech action flick is an unqualified success there's enough blood letting, witty ripostes and explosions to satisfy even the most jaded B-movie aficionado. An "eraser" is code for a witness protection program agent, one who removes all traces of a federal stoolies existence and if need be, terminate any goombahs seeking to exact revenge. As the top "eraser" for the feds

Schwarzenegger is assigned to keep tabs on Vanessa Williams, an employee of a defense contractor who has uncovered a corporate scheme to sell lethal "rail guns" between to a Russian terrorist organization. These manful firearms have X-ray viewing sights with aluminum bullets that can level city blocks and take out whole battalions. Naturally, the filmmakers ensure that ample use is made of these implements of destruction. Arnold is unaware, though, that his hopelessly corrupt boss (James Caan) with the aid of the assistant secretary of state

has engineered the whole thing. When he refuses to give Williams up, Schwarzenegger suddenly finds himself under attack from the CIA, FBI, the police and what appears to be the entire European theatre of operations. So who does our hero turn to, in the end, when his back is literally against the wall? The Mob! It's all rather silly and Vanessa Williams' moribund performance will have you wondering why Arnold just doesn't put a bullet in the former Miss America's brain pan and be done with it; still, director Russell doesn't give you time to ponder such weighty matters, moving as quickly and unobtrusively as he can from one mind bending scene to the next. And believe me, they are mind-bending.



"THE ACTION FUN HAS JUST BEGUN  
**SCHWARZENEGGER'S BACK  
AND BETTER THAN EVER."**

© 1996 Warner Bros.

R



# ONIAN JR

-THE BRUTARIAN-

Well, here I am again. With no account for myself. Little to say too 'cept God damn, there's so many boxes of tapes don't know whether I'll ever see the end of this. More keeps comin' every day. Yip! Daddy must a had a charge account or somethin' with all these peoples. So no need to hardly ever leave the shack. 'Cept to buy vittles and beer. My progenitor may not have left much and insurance sure don't pay up on a suicide, even an accidental one, but the welfare gives me more than enough to keep stocked on grits, biscuits, vienna sausages and beans. And beer. Mentioned the brew already didn't I? Well also like to mention at this juncture that I wish the Jack Shacks weren't so expensive; might find myself spendin' less time watchin' these shitty movies ifin' them gals didn't charge so much to empty my sacks. Anyhoo, here's my scribbled notes from a movie marathon from last Saturday night. And, ifn' I haven't done told you before, do not attempt to watch any of these flicks unless partakin' of the grape. You can ruin your mind for life otherwise.

Well Jesus H. Tap-Dancin' Christ, thisin' might have been a cheap sonofagun and it didn't have much nudity but *Satan's Children* shure was perverse. You got this wannabe gay pretty boy livin' with his stepfather and slatternly stepsister who goes and gets hisself raped by a bunch of motorcycle types and winds up dumped on the property of a satanic cult. The head honchos' gal falls in love with him and for this "sin" gets buried up to the neck, has molasses poured on her, and is left for the ants. To save her, our goldilocked hero has to kill a number of the cultists and return with the head of the

THE SACRED  
TEXTS! THE  
BLOOD OF THE  
LAMB!  
PARTAKE!



aforementioned stepfather and then offer up his nubile stepsister to a crucifixion. Slow movin' as all get out; yet, it's so relentlessly weird, hateful and amateurish I have to confess to drainin' a whole six pack of Old Milwaukee before the whole shebang done finished. (Video Vault)

Unfortunately, there ain't enough beer in the world to blot out the memory of *Mondo Keyhole* aka *The Worst Crime Of All*, a nasty piece of bidness from 1966, that for want of a better term I'd have to categorize as a psychedelic roughie. Did people actually pay to see things like this in the swingin' sixties? Aside from Richard Speck and Charlie Manson that is. What we got here is a middle age suit running a porn movie-

publishin' outfit who don't know whether all them beautiful babes he's rapin' and stranglin' really exist. This existential dilemma is brought home with swirlin' camera work, negative photography, weird angles, and shots of the heavin' sea and burnin' plastic skulls. Before it's all over Dracula and our anti-heros' pneumatic, blonde, heroin-shootin' wife get together. Golleee! That's kooky. Kinda impressive but also kinda unbelievably rude. The girls sure is purty but I have to think only a budding homicidal maniac would be interested in these goin's on. Jack Hill of *Spider Baby* fame was intimately involved but apparently doesn't like to talk about it. Don't blame him none. (Video Vault)

Almost as sick is the early seventies hardcore curio *Sex Kittens*. This starts off natural enough. Two hot blonde teenagers and their manfully unemployed thirty-somethin' lovers, after a little hot sex action by the pool, decide to take off for a weekend in Palm Springs, financin' the trip by havin' the gals do a little whorin' on the side. All well and good until one of the kittens gets herself kidnapped by a redneck and his retarded son (well, he was supposed to be retarded, but frankly, he didn't look nor act much different from most of the people I see on up at the Piggly Wigglys). They take her home to their shack, beat her, rape her and then put her out of her misery. Revenge is enacted by the deadbeat boyfriends in the form of rock to the skull and the-rope-around-the-balls-tie-it-to-the-bumper trick. If I hadn't just done finished with *Mondo Keyhole* I wouldn't believe human beings were capable of depravity like this. 'Course I haven't seen *Showgirls* yet neither. (Video Search of Miami)

*Night Life* may be a mainstream zombie flick but it's a pretty good mainstream zombie flick. What we got is this nerdy type named Archie (with red hair and a shitty haircut to boot) who gets picked on by day by two football jocks and their bodacious girlfriends, and by night by his undertaker uncle (John Astin) who makes poor Arch do all the dirty work down at the morgue. When his daytime tormenters pack it in in an auto crash Archie's troubles get worse 'cause they come back as zombies (something to do with chemicals at the accident site). And these zombies is wild, brother. They break necks, slit throats, and when they get bored, they do it to each other. Yeah,

man! What sets this above the usual trash of this type is the genuinely creepy atmosphere, the nasty gore effects and the fact that poor put upon Archie has to kind of harrow hell to discover his manhood and win the girl of his dreams. If this thang had any kind of nudity at all it would have been a classic; as it is, it's pretty gol darn entertainin'. (Video Vault)

Daddy done read me the *Bible* a lot 'fore he gone off and left; still, there was a bunch I didn't understand right. Like if God worked alone, why does He talk about "us" in Genesis? Like if it's a sin to kill, why ask Abraham to take the life of Isaac? And most curious of all, if Eve was created with Adam, how did Lilith get to

be that boy's first wife? The ways of God are strange to man, I suppose. And the ways of Lilith are strange to Onan in *Night Angels*, a movin' picture which plays like a lubriciously feverish dream of a bunch of oversexed Notre Dame graduate students. Lots of fornicatin' in this sleazy story which has Lilith trying to take over the world by ascendin' to the helm of the world's preeminent fashion magazine. Somehow the Devil's Whore, aka Lilith, figures if she gets her mug on the cover that's all she wrote for mankind. Which is real stupid, but ifn' you drink enough beers like I done, the weird set pieces, sexy neon hues and devilish beauty of Isa Andersen's Lilith are gonna get to you. Plus you got lots of inventive gore, Screamin' Jay Hawkins poppin' up with the theme song throughout, an unbelievable Bosch inspired stumble-through-Hell sequence, and Karen Black sportin' black nylons and panties in a tete-a-tete with Lilith. Aaaah-ooooo! That's Southern for "take me to the river." (Video Vault)

Soft core don't do much for me unless it's one of them 60s type roughies but this little piece of trash features one of the hottest women I ever seen in a sex flick: Sharon Kelly. A natural red head with beautiful full breasts, meaty thighs and just a wisp of down between the legs. Face is kind of cute too but I can't tell you too much about it if you know what I mean. Kelly plays the part of this nymphomaniacal pirate dj broadcasting herself masturbating and having sex over lush muzak. She manages to stay one step ahead of the cops thanks to this semi-retarded redneck who drives the van housing her equipment. Before Kelly

gives up the life she has half of Southern California rutting like weasels. Ain't much of a story, or a plot, but the gals is choice and if Kelly doesn't have you spankin' the monkey before the close you need to see a doctor. Or start hangin' out in bathhouses. (Video Vault)

When I was up to the Piggly Wiggly t'other day, I saw in one of them New York papers that Tarntula fella who did *Pulp Fiction* was rereleasing this old Jack Hill film *Switchblade Sisters*. So I thought I'd tell ya all a little bit about it. The "sisters" are the Dagger Debs, a sadistic sorority with close ties to the Silver Daggers, a largely-teenage male gang led by a swinish dolt named Dominick. The Silver Daggers ain't what you'd call a sophisticated criminal organization: they run whores out of a high school lavatories for five bucks a pop and openly clean and bag their dope during recess. Naturally, a gang this moronic is right ripe for musclin', and when the muscle comes in the form of a crosstown drung dealing cartel, Dominick turns as he always does, to the Debs and their leader Lacc. It gets pretty complicated from here but *Sisters* moves real fast, and Hill provides ample doses of nudity, bloodletting and graphic brutality to keep you from noticin' how terrible the actin' is. *Rebel Without A Cause* this may not be; still, you're more than likely to agree that *Sisters* is as they say in France et un classique du cinema merde. (Video Vault)

Switchblade  
Sisters



# BRUTARIAN LIBRARY

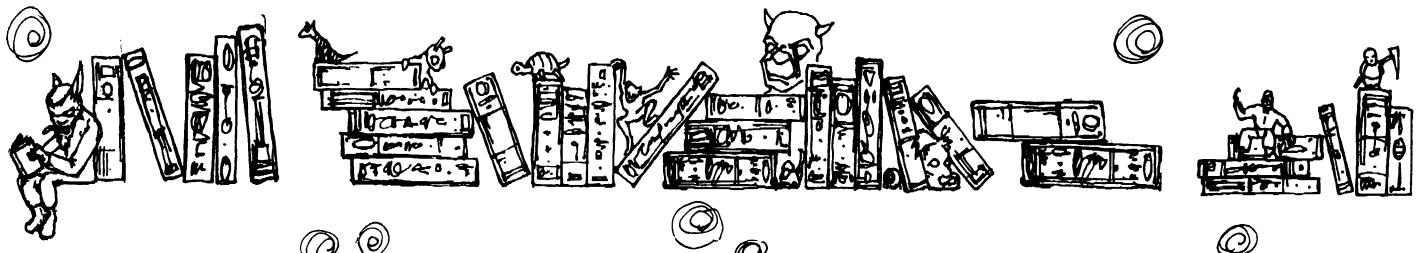


Venus In Spurs - The Secret Female Fear Of Commitment - Sheila Gillooly (Henry Holt) 1996

I admit I approached this book with a certain amount of reluctance. The titillating title and the godawful pink cover were not promising, and neither was the cover photo, which looks sort of like June Cleaver right after she's discovered that Ward is the Incredible Shrinking Man. "Just what the world need," I thought, "another self-help book." The last one of these I attempted was John Gray's heavily stereotyped *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. (Not that I make a habit of perusing these things: I just wanted to see what all the hype was about.) In the case of *Venus In Spurs*, however, I had a mission. I knew plenty of commitment-shy women; what I wondered was, how can it be such a secret?

Gillooly begins her treatise by pointing out the obvious: "The common perception of the commitment issue is that it is inherently gender-divided. Women want security and involvement, and men don't . . . The blood and guts of the issue, naturally, is more blurred."

The male fear of commitment has been generally accepted to the point of becoming a stereotype. Gillooly says women have always felt the same way, but usually aren't able to recognize that fear for what it is. She contends that this is a relatively recent development. "Feminism encouraged female assertiveness and ambition," Gillooly writes, "but because women are still socialized, at least emotionally, to equate



success with pleasing others - and specifically with attracting a man - we've just channeled all that ambitious energy into figuring out what the man we desire wants and how we can provide it . . . Consider our role models, our mothers, those masters of self-effacement, who may or may not have had jobs, but who always had dinner on the table at six sharp anyway."

Note the use of that mutual "we" address. Gillooly's style is more than a little reminiscent of *Cosmo*, with a spunky "just us girls" quality that, fortunately, isn't pushed to a cloyingly chatty extreme. There is a *Cosmo*-style quiz in the back of the book, however, complete with obviously slanted questions and a scoring key to let the reader tally up how commitment-shy she is.

To back up her arguments, Gillooly relates stories about her own and other women's experiences in pursuit of obviously unavailable men: married men, gay men, men who live in distant cities . . . The repetitive listing of each dead-end relationship and self-destructive decision is both appalling and depressingly believable.

Why women fear commitment is another question. In general, Gillooly says (no great surprise), the reasons seem to be pretty much the same for women as for men: getting treated badly in a past romance; having a rotten childhood, an unstable home life,

abusive siblings or parents. For women, however, there is the added factor of physical appearance: being judged too thin, too fat, big-breasted or flat-chested.

Gillooly offers a few obvious suggestions to help afflicted females become less fearful of the "C" word. Recovery is guaranteed to be a time-consuming, labor-intensive task, but then, so is just about any form of behavior modification. One only hopes that it will all be worth it in the end.

- Charlene Brusso

#### Cult Rapture - Adam Parfrey (1995) Feral House

Here's your starter kit for peering into the world of the practicing weirdo. At that level, this book excels. Elsewhere, it's very definitely a flawed diamond.

Adam Parfrey has done a fair amount of journalistic digging around at the fringes of society. He's found some really neat people. He's found some really neat things. But he's failed to really grab me by the lapels and give me a good shake.

I think part of the problem is that *Cult Rapture*, in the main, is nothing more than recycled articles Adam has had published in other periodicals. Each piece stands alone well enough, that's

for sure, but when they're all stitched together nothing larger seems to emerge. There's no overarching . . . nuthin'.

In addition, Adam himself seems unsure of what he's dug up, what he's written about it, and what he should do next. The chapter entitled "The Girlfriend Who Last Saw Elvis Alive Fan Club" is a good example. The piece itself is a glittering jewel of the sardonic.

## CULT RAPTURE

EXPOSE  
ON THE  
OKLAHOMA CITY  
BOMBING!



ADAM PARFREY

Here, Adam rips, tears, and shreds an entire CLASS of nitwit with gusto and glee. It's a job that H. L. Mencken would have been proud of. So what does Adam do next? Puts a horrid, pulsing, exculpatory, introduction in front of it that essentially eviscerates the entire thing before you get to read a single word of it. What the hell's it gonna be Adam? Shit or sugar? I don't like sugar on my shit. Make

up your fucking mind.

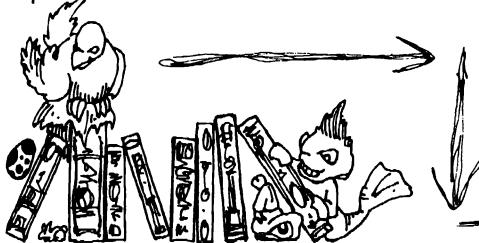
This wobbly perspective extends throughout the entire work.

Back in the tail end of the book, when you get to the stuff about militias, this flopping and flailing of perspective becomes absolutely vertiginous. Disregarding intros, the articles start jumping around all over the place; each one seeming to work hard to undo the effects of the one before it. No focus. No viewpoint. No STAND on anything. Or at least not one I can see. As evidenced by his choice of material, Adam apparently can't decide whether or not the folks out on the boundaries of experience are to be: a) laughed at; b) pitied; c) feared; or d) asked about membership dues.



Perhaps, I'm being too rough here. For *Cult Rapture* is, despite my reservations, a good read however often it drifts and maulders into a morass of introspection and side issues.

Somewhere, in a bad black and white movie, somebody reaches across the typewriter and delivers Adam Parfrey a stinging slap to the chops. Adam shakes it off, looks his assaulter square in the face and says, "Thanks, I needed that." As the music swells in the background, Parfrey returns to the typewriter pounding furiously at the keys with rapt concentration. The resulting work is the rapturous compendium the evocative title promises. - James MacLaren



Death Scenes - ed. Sean Tejaratchi (1996) Feral House

Well, here it is. The coffee table book from Hell. *Death Scenes, A Homicide Detective's Scrapbook*.

Yep, It's exactly what you think it is.. But with a few twists. First off, everything is black and white. That's because the scrapbook this little jewel was mined from was assembled by a guy on the homicide squad who worked the beat from the Twenties to the early Fifties. A black-and-white era if ever there was one.

Second off, there's just a smidgen of other weird photos too. Stuff that properly doesn't "belong" in this collection of unbelievably gruesome shots. Aside from that, *Death Scenes* is basically wall to wall dead people with a slant towards the ironic, odd, and . . . hideous.

Try this thing out on your oh-so-bad boyfriends. Stay away from the ones that like it.

Or maybe leave it on that coffee table when people you don't really like drop by for a visit.

It's an ugly work, filled with ugly pictures. It even manages to smell strange. Like fingerprint ink or something. And the black borders around every page give the product a disquieting, noirish cast. I suppose this is about as "good" as something like this can be done. Although "good" is perhaps an oxymoron when talking about a picture book chock full of corpses. Still, a great gift for that special loved one. - James MacLaren

The End Of Alice - A. M. Homes (1995) Scribners

Each of us to our own little prisons. In A. M. Homes' sits no one, every one, a someone with no name - pedophile, murderer, sybarite - asking, "Who is she that she should have this afflicted addiction, this oddly acquired taste for the freshest of flesh to tell a story . . . "

She is you. She is me. She is a 19 year old suburban co-ed with the hots for young boys. She is writing to the prisoner - maybe she isn't, maybe "she" doesn't exist - because she has the "weirdest dreams," because she wants him/us to have "a look at her life."

What life there is.

Home from college. Sleeping most of the night. In the day, the search - in shopping malls, amusement arcades and public parks - for boys. Boys at that age of "supreme softness where muscles waiting to bloom are coated in a medium thick layer of flesh . . ." She longs to sample the pre-adolescent.

In his cell, he, no man, dreams of a roast with onions, carrots, red peppers and cherry tomatoes. Or is it "she" who? . . .

Difficult to tell them apart. The two begin to-merge: the imprisoned narrators' efflorescing infatuation with the Alice of the title and the suburban girl's discovery and seduction of a twelve year old. As do the inchoate, sexual memories of both: is it our convict fistfucking his mother in a souther bath house or is he just recreating a fantasy in a communication from

his admirere?

In these letters, and how quickly I have come to look forward to them, cannot live without them,

am, in fact, living on them, in them; it is as though

I am her, she is me, and we are in this together, doing this twisted tantric tango.

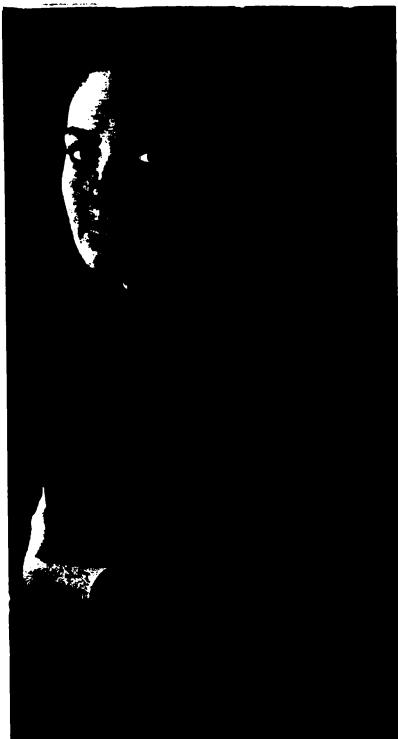
Teasing leads to confessing leads to madness. The girl puts a dog-collar on a child and ties him in the yard so she can fuck her young lover. Later, she allows herself to be orally sodomized by the boy's father. On a cell block no man beats his husband senseless, rapes him, then leaves. Invitation, of sorts, to gang rape.

Communications between the parties cease. The girl is not a pedophile. Her affair was apparently just a phase not "the discovering of a discerning palate for nature's delicacies . . ." she is disposed of. Now we are ready to hear the way in which Alice was disposed.

Ironically, this tying of loose ends, this denouement, is sweet and rather touching. The sex, unlike that earlier in the tale(s), is gentle, erotic, and yes, arousing. Is this something we should be feeling? What does it tell us about ourselves?

Oh Rose, thou art sick . . .

The last word between our correspondents rings in our heads, beats in our guts: "P.S. I'm not afraid of you anymore, I'm more afraid of myself."



## THE AUTHOR

Rude Awakenings - Joe Service and Purnell Christian (Dennis McMillan Publications 2421 E. Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85719 \$12.95 plus \$3.00 P&H)

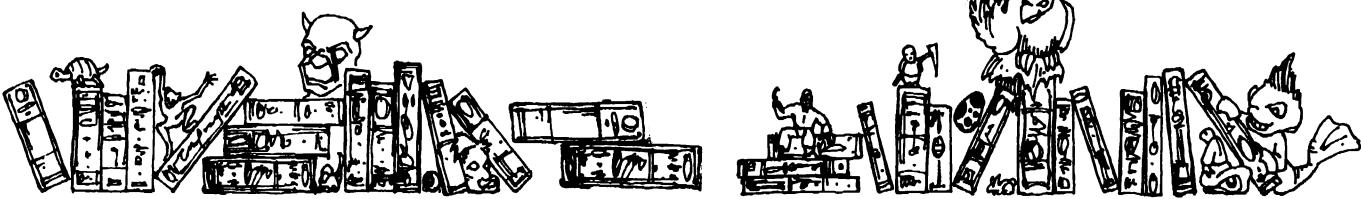
While *Rude Awakenings* may not be quite what the comic cognoscenti had in mind when the the "graphic novel" was coined to designate the elevated status of the comic book as art, it is, undoubtedly, one of the best entries in the genre. *Rude* is at times astonishingly depraved and an absolutely welcome addition to any library that includes writers like Charles Willeford, John Fante, Charles Bukowski, and all the other celebrated scribes who navigate the reader through life's lower depths. Four of the five stories included were excerpted from Christian's remarkable short story collection, *Modern Physics & Other Tales*, and each documents the lives of the marginal man in varying stages of terminal decay.

The doomed men in *Rude* casually mix psychiatric drugs with the cheap booze they swill, leer at bikini magazines in grocery stores for hours, date women they met through personal ads in swingers' magazines, and brood in front of the TV for most of their lives.

What makes the stories so compelling is that each character seems to possess an inner understanding or acceptance of his fate. Many of the protagonists share remarkable insight and are able to articulate them so precisely, the reader feels compelled to adopt them as rallying cries for America's Doomed. In "Another Stupid Weekend" an outsider appraises the company executives at his temp job as "snots with yellow ties and suspenders" with degrees in "business or engineering or some nonsense. In other words, not educated, but trained to grub for cash, like an organ grinder's monkey." Service's crude, but always effective illustration work details the human ruin and the squalid landscape they inhabit quite well. Dive bars, crumbling tenement apartments, and lifeless strip malls are all filled with the detail they deserve. Service capably fills nearly every frame with the tools of the derelict's trade: stray beer bottles, dirty dishes, and porno mags. The sequences featuring drug-induced hallucinations are harrowing, but mostly hilarious and the abundant amounts of T & A do have their own merits. As would be expected, you probably won't find *Rude Awakenings* at your local B. Dalton', so do the right thing and order it from the publisher at the above address. You probably don't know how much you need this.

Rex Doane





50 Greatest Conspiracies -  
Jonathan Vankin & John Whalen  
(1995) Citadel Press

In 1931, an experiment by the Rockefeller Institute in which a number of Puerto Ricans were deliberately infected with cancer, was forced to be aborted after thirteen of the subjects died.

Unfazed, Chief Pathologist Cornelius Rhoades' issued this statement:

The Porto [sic] Ricans are the dirtiest, laziest, most degenerate and

thievish race of men ever inhabiting this sphere . . . I have done my

best to further the process of extermination by killing off eight and

transplanting cancer into several more . . . All physicians take

delight in the abuse and torture of the unfortunate subjects.

Personally, I disagree, believing the Bulgarians, those attempted killers of His Holiness, The Pope, to be the most degenerate of humans; but that is a conspiracy in and of itself (Chapter 46) and has little to do with Dr. Rhoades' genocidal practices. For his crimes, the good Doctor not only got off scot free but was put in charge by the U.S. Government of two large chemical warfare projects during the 40s, granted a seat on The Atomic Energy Commission and eventually pinned with The Legion of Merit.

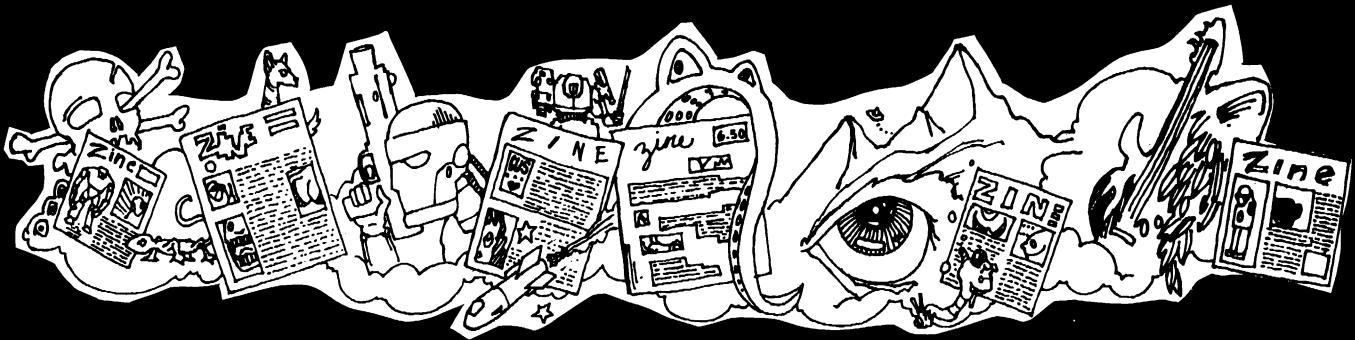
At least Dr. Rhoades was an American. Japanese war criminal Dr. Shiro Ishii commandant of a sadistic medical experiment camp in Machuria (dramatised in the cult flick *Man Behind The Sun*) deliberately infected thousands of human beings, American and British POWs among them, as part of his diabolic biowarfare experiments. The reward for the father of biological weaponry? Immunity from prosecution if he agreed to share his test results with American researchers. And give the occasional lecture at Fort Dietrick, a CIA outpost specializing in germ warfare. Where many credentialed conspiracy theorists believe the AIDS virus was brewed. Maybe not, but it seems curious that the National Institute of Health asked the good folks there to help them in developing a cure for the disease. Curiouser still: an Army Colonel discussing the AIDS-biowarfare charges in 1987 stated: "Studies at army laboratories have shown that the AIDS virus would be an extremely poor biological warfare agent." What studies? Why study something that could only be caught as a result of intimate sexual contact? Unless of course, you were trying to perfect something of your own devise.

Ah, but it all sounds so fabulous doesn't it? Our own defense forces, sworn to preserve and protect, deliberately infecting innocent civilians. How could they? How could they hire prostitutes to dope innocent johns with LSD so they could measure

the effects of the drug (Project MK-ULTRA)? How could they not only deny treatment to 400 syphilitic Afro-Americans for over 40 years (Tuskegee Syphilis Study)? How could they spew rare serratia bacteria over San Francisco, unleash toxins into the Pentagon air conditioning system and New York subways?

Conspiracy researcher Jonathan Vankin and his pal John Whalen have come to tell you that everything you know is wrong and everyone you've ever admired is a bum. Toward that end, they've chosen fifty conspiracies. Primarily because of their entertainment value (although they also claim their choices were influenced by historical significance and verifiable information). While there are some rather curious omissions - Is there a more "entertaining" conspiracy than that involving Elvis' death and subsequent resurrection? Or anything with the possibility of causing greater upheaval than the revelations suppressed in the recently discovered Dead Sea Scrolls? - and a lot of quick takes on complex subjects, *50 Greatest Conspiracies* is provocative, often quite penetrating and undeniably engrossing. It may not change the way you "look at the world" but it will certainly make you the hit of almost any cocktail party.





Z-I-N-E

Sweet Jesus, I have to do this column again? Where in God's name is the Pope of Ohio? He can't be having a midlife crisis; he's way past forty. Looks it too.

Moreover, he likes reading zines and underground publications. Me? The lowest I go is hard-boiled fiction and even

then it's the guys who can write - Chandler, Hammett, Thompson (sometimes). So Jim or Pope or whatever the fuck you're calling

yourself these days, come back, all is forgiven; bad prose in the service of sensationalism may thrill you but it gives me a headache.

What is it we want in a woman? Sweetness and light? Softness? Curves? What about hair? Yes, yes, of course on the head and on the holy of holies, but what about

everywhere else? Like the armpits, the face, the ass crack, etc. Right, if you wanted that you'd paint two titties on the back of your

best friend and have him bend over. The publisher of HAIR TO STAY - "The World's Only Magazine For Lovers Of Natural Hairy Women" - would like to respectfully

disagree. Pam Winter, the culprit behind this highly questionable venture, considers herself one of the world's hairiest women [sic] being the proud possessor of dark

growth on every inch of her body including her nose. Her nose? What is this bitch, a fucking werewolf? Whatever she is, a

lifetime of tweezing and waxing has evidently unhinged her mind. But then most of her "contributors" are, to put it

politely, a few bricks short of a load. What is "contributed" are poorly written stories ("Sadie Lee had the hairiest pussy that he'd

ever seen. It was like a pile of soft black hair that went down her upper legs all the way to her bellybutton in a thick trial.") about falling in love with hirsute women and reviews of tapes (*Laurie's Bush Patrol, Hot and Hairy*) of broads who don't believe

## Hair To Stay

The world's only magazine for lovers of natural, hairy women

imagine a close up  
of a hairy pie right  
Here  
↙ ↓ ↘

(guess our xerox don't  
like hairy chix)

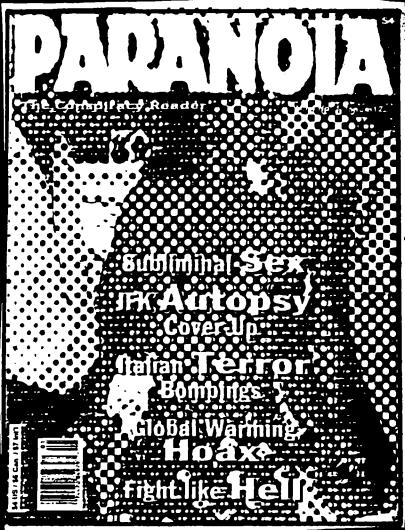
ISSUE FIVE  
SPRING 1990  
NINE DOLLARS

in electrolysis. And the pictures.

Marone! Unshaved armpits can be  
sexy, sure, but hairy assholes?

Jesus, I have a nicely lined  
ass and even I don't ask my girlfriend  
to look at it. Much less lick it.

Hey, but what do I know, right?  
You might be jerking off all over  
yourself as you read this so maybe  
you should send nine dollars and  
an age statement to Winter



You know the people who run things want to destroy you, don't you? So what can you do about it? That's right, stay away from commercial television, *Time* magazine and the front page of newspapers. Do this, you've got a running start on a life relatively free of fear, madness and tragedy. Unless you have the misfortune to pick up a copy of PARANOIA. Spaceships from an unknown planet insist on dropping small dinosaurs (Chupacabras or goatsuckers to you) in Puerto Rico which drain the blood and remove vital organs from cats, dogs and livestock! Extraterrestrials deliberately slicing and dicing innocent humans for no apparent reason!! University card-access systems as the first step in a fascist scheme to eliminate all freedoms in society!!! All of this is true. None of it matters; as the earth, according to the editors, is about to be destroyed by either asteroid or comet impact. I knew there was a reason I drank so much. (\$15 for four issues. Send to Paranoia, Box 1041, Providence, RI 02903)



Six dollars may seem a bit pricey for a zine focusing on crap filmed in Europe but **EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA** is worth the

price of admission. We've slogged this mag before in these pages and the two or three readers still subscribing to Brutarian may think of our continued praise as overkill but really you need to get this (and

elsewhere. Go figure. (\$1.00 to We Like Poo, 3128 16th St., #125 San Francisco, CA 94103)

*Asian Trash Cinema* as well). There's a lot of great duff being produced overseas and Craig Ledbetter's handsome digest is the last and probably only word on the subject. Lots of sleazy pictures too. Plus entertaining interviews with the likes of Alex (*Mutant Action*) De La Iglesia and a marvelous on-site report of Jean Rollins' latest effort. (\$20 to ETC, Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325)

I love horror. Read everything about it I can get my hands on. Even though most of what I come across in the genre sucks.

THE SCREAM FACTORY, however, is an exception. The exception. You can take your *Fangorias*, *Midnight Marquees* and *Scarlet Streets* and shove them up your ass. This is the goods, baby. Exhaustively researched, literate and pulling no punches, SF is the last word on the subject.

(alright *Cemetery Dance* is pretty good too). This issue tackles British horror in exhaustive and entertaining fashion, throws in extensive coverage of the contemporary scene, and an interview with, and a short story by, one R. Chetwynd-Hayes. \$5.95 (plus one hundred twenty cents postage) is ridiculously cheap for one hundred and thirty-five densely packed pages. Send your hard earned greenbacks immediately to Deadline Press, 166473 Redwood Lodge Road, Los Gatos, CA 95030.

Alright, you shitheads, and I mean that literally, I've found the publication for you: WE LIKE POO. Two guesses as to what it's all about. That's right, excrement. The chic loves the stuff and perhaps more

importantly for all you aspiring coprophagiasts, she's looking for recipes! As well as stories, personal accounts, illustrations and photos dealing with things fecal. Those interested in flatulence are politely requested to take their business



**TAIL SPINS.** An attractively designed, intelligent, comprehensive guide to the contemporary rock scene. There are a million of these things out there. This is better than most but I really so what? Do you have enough time to read everything? Of course not. And when the project is filtered through the minds of dozens of contributors how reliable is it? This is the reason we had the zine revolution in the

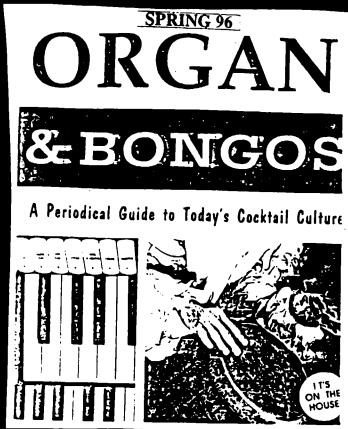
first place. How ironic that the so-called publishing revolution has resulted in this: hip, vaguely self-effacing, vanity productions limning a void. (\$3.00 to Box 5467, Evanston, IL 60204)

first place. How ironic that the so-called publishing revolution has resulted in this hip, vaguely self-effacing, vanity

# FREAKS!

Ever wondered, if you were the kid of a Siamese Twin, whether you would get all the money if they both died? Would it depend on your mother and aunt having one vagina between them? These are the kinds of conundrums that cause Big Dick sleepless nights. Chris Fellner doesn't provide the answer in his *FREAKS!* journal but he provides all manner of delectable goodies to make up for it. First, there's the story of the conjoined twins, The Blazek

Sisters, whose deaths resulted in the aforementioned legal dilemma. Then there's a tasty little interview with Grade Z filmmaker Fred Olen Ray. Why Fred Olen Ray? Because he's not only an authority on human and animal oddities but he runs grindshows as a hobby. There's also a guided tour of medical museums by Tim "Torture King" Cridland, a "Freaks in the news" section and much, much more. The fact that it's profusely illustrated as well, makes this unassuming little zine a bargain at \$3.50. (Chris Fellner, 45 Taylors Way, Holland, Pennsylvania 18966)



About halfway through *ORGAN & BONGOS*, an impractical guide to "today's cocktail culture," I suddenly realized, why I was laughing so much mit delight: all the writers were alcoholics. No doubt this is

what gives the world weary prose style of publisher Russell Scheidelman's hedonists

such a marvelously sardonic air. Start with the drink recipes, mix yourself a few, and get ready to take a trip through the

seriously wiggled minds of . . . the heavy social drinker. Tours of infamous cocktail lounges which may or may not exist, 60s music reintroduced as Sock-It-To-Me and Go-Go, a screenplay from a Fritz Lang-

Busby Berkeley sixties spy flick (prints of which were apparently destroyed in a studio lot fire). And more. 100% proof positive that the pure products of American distilleries go crazy. (Coupla bucks or a

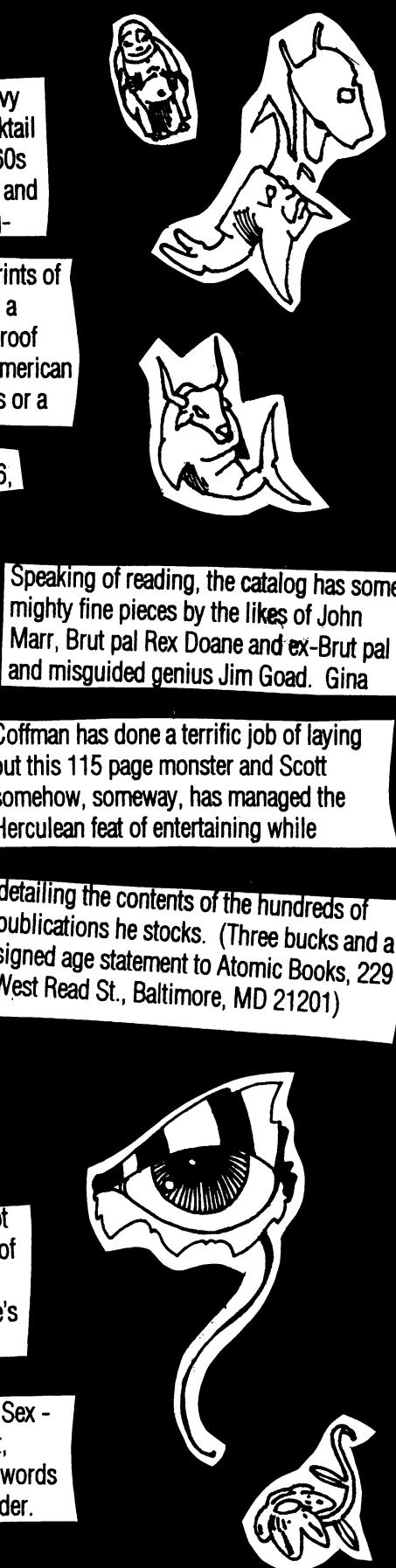
pint of Old Crow to Russell, Box 20396, Seattle, WA 98102)



Now that *Loompanics* has dropped *Brutarian* from its catalog, we feel we can come clean about ATOMIC BOOKS and their whacky compendium of outre and sublime material: it's the best. No one, not

even *See Hear*, can touch them. Well, not "them," it's Scott Huffines, a young man of exquisite taste and refined sensibilities. After only a few years in the business, he's assembled a collection of marginalia for

your delectation beyond compare. Sex - knew that'd get your attention - cult, mondo, trash, sleaze: inspirational words for the well schooled and jaded reader.



# The Garden Of Weeds

an anonymous English rhyme

A man  
of words  
and not  
of deeds...

IS LIKE  
A GARDEN  
FULL  
OF WEEDS.

AND WHEN  
THE WEEDS  
BEGIN  
TO GROW...

IT'S LIKE  
A GARDEN  
FULL  
OF SNOW.

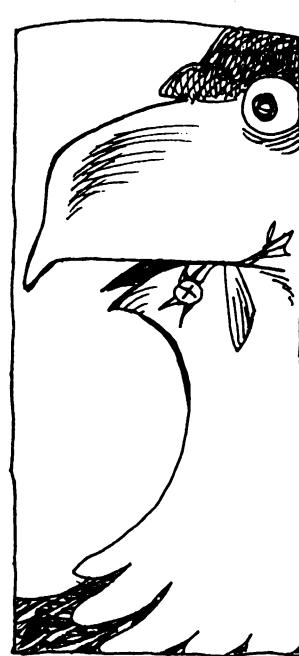
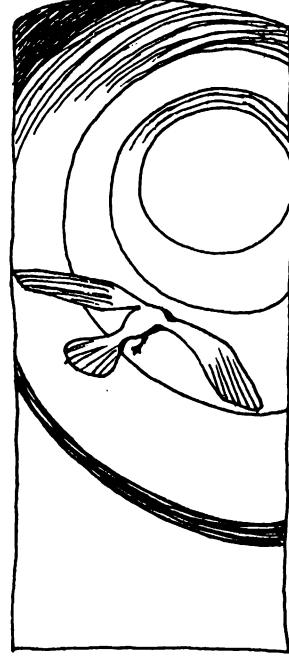
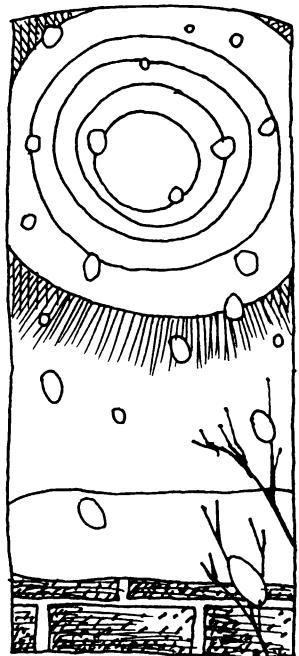


AND WHEN  
THE SNOW  
BEGINS  
TO FALL...

IT'S LIKE  
A BIRD  
UPON  
THE WALL.

AND WHEN  
THE BIRD  
AWAY  
DOES FLY...

IT'S LIKE  
AN EAGLE  
IN  
THE SKY.



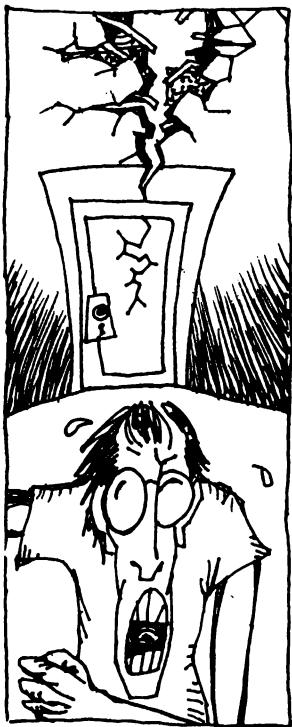
AND WHEN  
THE SKY  
BEGINS  
TO ROAR...



IT'S LIKE  
A LION  
AT  
THE DOOR.



AND WHEN  
THE DOOR  
BEGINS  
TO CRACK...



IT'S LIKE  
A STICK  
UPON  
YOUR BACK.



AND WHEN  
YOUR BACK  
BEGINS  
TO SMART...



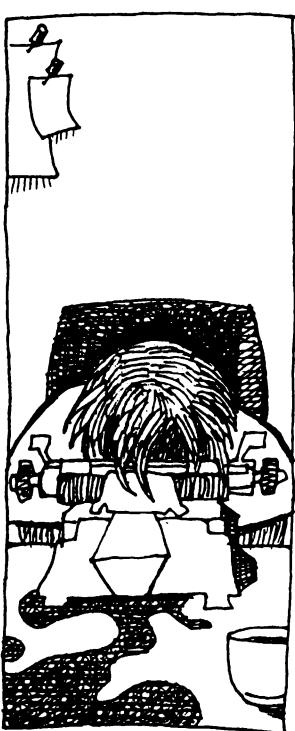
IT'S LIKE  
A PEN-KNIFE  
IN YOUR  
HEART.



AND WHEN  
YOUR HEART  
BEGINS  
TO BLEED...



YOU'RE DEAD  
AND DEAD  
AND DEAD  
INDEED.



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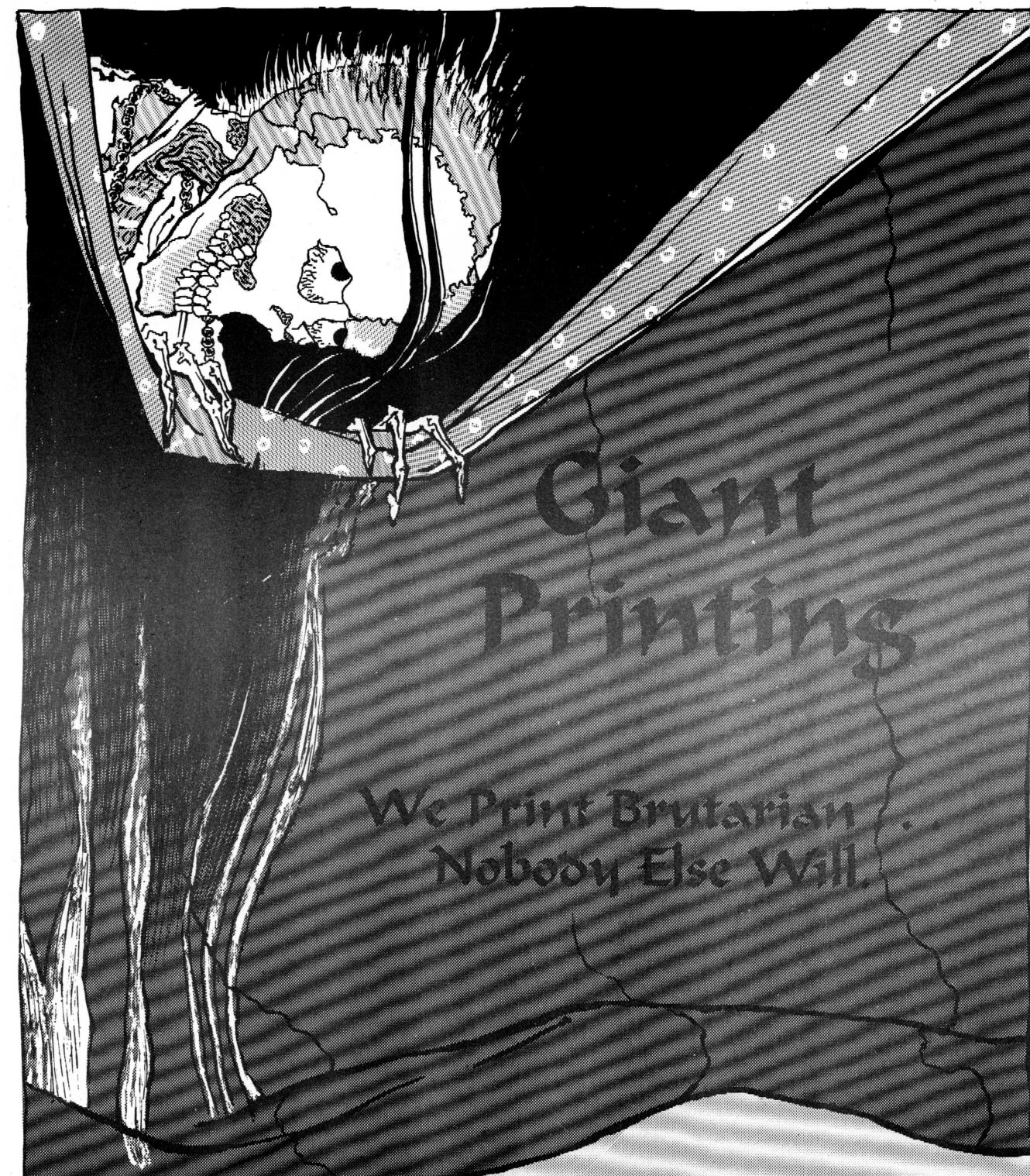
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